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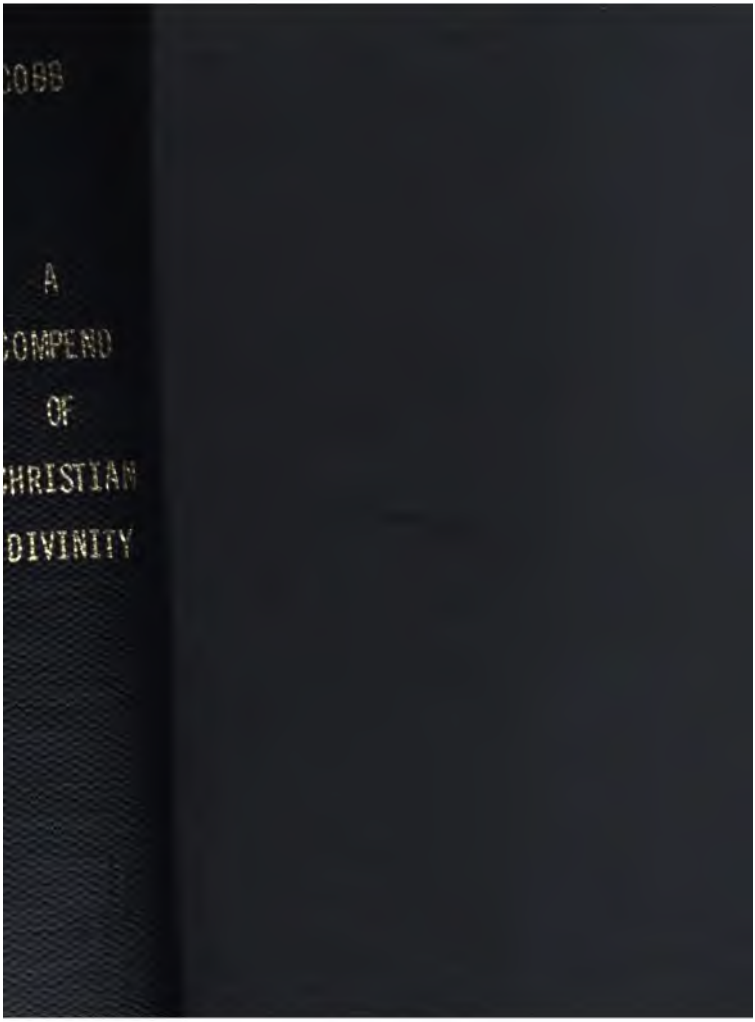
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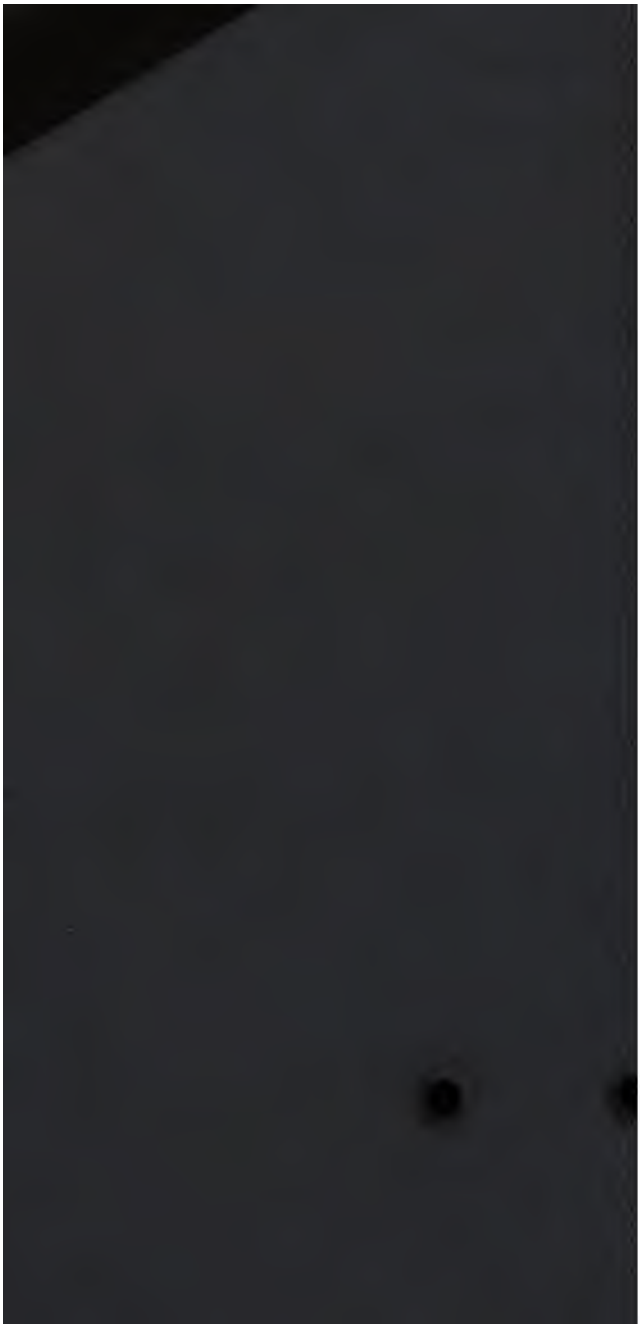
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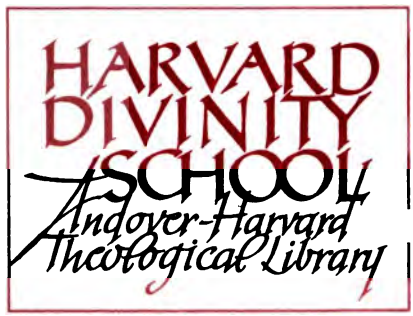

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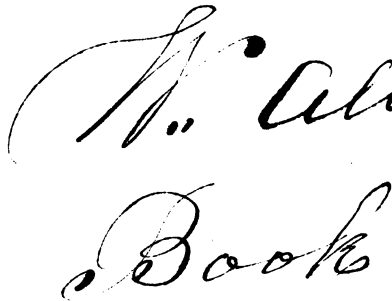



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# COMPEND

OF

# CHRISTIAN DIVINITY.

BY SYLVANUS COBB.

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# PREFACE.

In the preparation of this work for the public, we are governed by a desire for the promotion of Christian knowledge and virtue. Though all knowledge is important in its place, and there are discoveries of sublime moral and scientific truths, from a study of the nature and fitness of things, yet nothing has such power to enlarge, elevate, purify and bless the human mind, as the knowledge and love of revealed religion.

This work is a desideratum in the Universalist public. We have many able Theological productions; but they are devoted respectively to some particular point or points of the general system of Christian doctrines, no one book comprising a complete compend or body of divinity. We often meet with inquirers after truth, who ask our reference to a book, from which they can obtain a knowledge of our views of Christianity as a whole, embracing all its essential principles. To such a book we have not been able to refer them. The different writers have accomplished their respective designs; but no one, of whom we know, has grasped so extensive a plan.

This is the plan undertaken by the writer of the following pages. The being of God; his Creation of the world and all things in it: the Character of God; his

Law for the government of his children: the Penalties of the law, their Nature and Design; the Judgment of God, and the Judgment committed to Jesus Christ; Forgiveness of Sins, viewed in relation to the Scripture doctrine of Retribution; the Person of Jesus Christ,—his Mission, and the great and glorious purpose of his mission; the Evidences of Christianity in the Gospel History; the Resurrection; the Sovereignty of God and Moral Accountability of Man; Faith, Repentance, and the New Birth; and the practical Influence of the Christian Doctrines on the heart and life;—all these subjects, in which are involved all the principles of faith and practice in revealed religion, are here consecutively presented, and variously argued, each being exhibited in its own distinctive features, and in its harmony with all the rest.

I have been several years contemplating this work, and preparing different portions of it, as, from time to time, my other engagements have afforded me leisure. And now, having brought it to a completion, while I am conscious of the imperfections of its execution, I send it forth in the agreeable hope, that it will be the humble means of aiding many inquiring minds on their way to truth, to God, and to heaven.

I do not claim to represent, in all things, the entire body of Christians to which I belong. There are some minute particulars in which the true liberty of thought among us has led to a variety of opinions. Perhaps the point in which there is the greatest differ-

ence of opinion amongst us, is in the subject of our thirteenth chapter, the Sovereignty of God in its relation to the Accountability of Man. But even here the essential difference is not so great as the difference in the manner of expression. I have uttered what I take to be truth on the subject, with faithfulness and candor. I piously believe that the evasions which some Christians, of different orders, have practised in relation to this subject, are of unfavorable tendency. A fear has been entertained in respect to the moral influence of a full development of truth, Scriptural and Philosophical, on this subject. But I believe that no moral good can result from a perpetual strife of the will against the convictions of the understanding, and an effort to build virtue on forced and unsatisfactory ground. Better go with truth into all its depths and heights, and build virtue on its own legitimate, harmonious, and eternal principles. Better dig down to the solid rock, and build our house upon it, that when the winds beat upon it, and the floods come, it may stand secure.

I would not be understood as meaning that there is no discretion to be used, as to time, occasion and manner, of dwelling on certain subjects, which lie deep in the great heart of universal nature. The circulation of the blood in the physical system is an important fact, useful to be known. Yet I would not have one forever thinking, and watching and dwelling on the heart's palpitations. Adapting the knowledge of this

great fact, as occasion requires, to its legitimate useful purposes, we will ordinarily leave this grand hidden work to the laws which are established for it, and go about the duties of those visible relations which belong to our common concerns. But all accessible truths, the most hidden from the superficial glance, in philosophy and revelation, it is our duty and privilege to know, and, according to its natural uses, to improve and enjoy.

It is recommended to inquirers after truth, that they commence with this work, and read it through in course. Let the Scriptures referred to in the several chapters be examined in their connexions; and, by help of the Concordance, let the Scripture teachings generally, on the same subject, receive due attention. And in pursuit of this interesting course of study for Christian culture and improvement, let the harmony of the Christian doctrines be especially noticed, as an internal evidence of their true divinity. Let each precious truth, as you gather it on the way, be treasured up, and put to practice, that "your friends may have occasion to say of you as the apostle said to the Thessalonian Christians, that "your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all toward each other aboundeth."

With regard to references to the original languages of the Scriptures, I have been as sparing of them as was deemed compatible with duty, touching the sense of the sacred text. The words Sheol, Hades, Gehen-

na and Tartarus, which are all rendered hell in the Common Version, have become Anglicized by familiar discussion and use. There is no more pedantry in a familiar reference to them, when discussing the passages in which they occur, than there is in the use of the term *baptize*, which is the Greek word with an English termination. These words should all have been permitted to stand, like *baptizo*, untranslated in the Scriptures; and then the definition and history of them would have been introduced into our English dictionaries, and the English reader of the Bible would have found easier access to some of its teachings.

The same remarks may be made on the word *Aion*, in its substantive and adjective forms. If it had been invariably retained in the Common Version, untranslated, it would only have been adding another word to the English vocabulary, and the common reader would have easily gathered an idea of its proper force by observing its ample Scripture usage, and comparing text with text.

To the foregoing catalogue may be added the Greek word *Krisis*, which signifies *judgment*, *condemnation* or *punishment*. It is in a few instances rendered *damnation* in the New Testament. The school-boy reads in the Scriptures, "He that believeth not shall be *damned;*" "He shall be in danger of eternal (*aionion*) *damnation.*" He goes to the English dictionary, and finds the word *damn* defined to signify, "To doom to

torments in a future state." In this manner he is deceived. He does not know that the Saviour used a synonymous verb in the passage, "He that believeth not shall be *damned*, as where it reads, "He that believeth not *is condemned* already; and this is the condemnation, that men have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil." If he had known this, he would have been likely to perceive that Jesus, in the first mentioned saying, spoke of the condemnation which is connected with unbelief, and is limited by it. And then, too, upon reading, (Mark iii. 29,) "Whosoever blasphemeth against the Holy Ghost, hath never (not) forgiveness (*eis ton aiona*, to the age,) but is in danger of eternal damnation," (*aionion kriseos*, age-lasting punishment,) he would be able to comprehend that the *aionion* punishment to which the Jews should be subjected for that sin, is the same *aion* of condemnation *unto* which they should not have forgiveness; an *aion* which shall have ended when the fulness of the Gentiles are come in, and "all Israel shall be saved, as it is written."

I do not mean, however, that the Greek word for condemnation should have been preserved in the English Version. It would not have been so convenient a word for Anglicizing. But there should have been a greater uniformity in the translation. These facts all should know, that they may not be misled by the sound of a word in the English tongue.

I have referred to other original terms, in a few in-

stances only, when it seemed necessary to give force to an important idea involved in the subject.

It will be observed by the reader, that I have not headed the chapters of this work with a statement of doctrines which I pledge myself in the outset to maintain. The chapters are headed with the proposed subjects of inquiry, and we follow the evidence in coming at our conclusions. Truth is our aim; and why should a man desire to deceive himself, or to be deceived? "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," is a noble sentiment for human life. As we advance by the practice of this principle, we shall pluck of delicious sweets as we pass along,—and new beauties, and increasing glories will open to our view as we travel onward.

There is one important fact which I think every candid reader will distinctly perceive in the perusal of this work. We have not depended upon the doubtful criticism of a word to sustain a darling tenet. It is a phenomenon, remarkable, but not unusual, to see Doctors enlisted in the cause of dogmas, which are palpably opposed to the revealed character of God, to the avowed principles and purposes of his government, to the spirit and design of the Saviour's mission, to the acknowledged wishes of the Deity, to the deep soul-moving prayers of all good men,—in short, opposed to every holy aspiration in earth or heaven,—and there they stand, with inveterate will contending for *such* dogmas, by the bare instrumentality of a

*verbal criticism.* And what must soon prove fatal to their thankless cause, is, that this very sovereign defence, their verbal criticism, is itself as great a perversion of words, as their doctrines are of principles. Ours is a happier lot. To all the essential doctrines which are brought out and established by these investigations, we have been led as legitimate results, by following the great fundamental principles of revelation, as they flow in unbroken currents from the beginning to the end of the Inspired Volume,—principles which all sects acknowledge to gush out in the kind desires of the eternal Father, and which have the hearty AMEN of all benevolent beings. Yea, more,—all true *criticism of words*, too, conducts to the same results. Shall not these doctrines stand forever?

We intended to comprise our work within the compass of 400 pages; but when it was nearly completed in stereotype, we found ourself obliged to enlarge it by the addition of 32 pages, and were obliged to abridge the last two chapters, to avoid increasing it even to a larger size. This addition renders the work more expensive to us, and will diminish the remuneration of our own labors and outsets,—for we make no addition to the contemplated price. Our hope is that it may do good, and that it may be found worthy of a place in many a Christian family in our country and the world. Unto this end, may the blessing of God attend it.

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# COMPEND OF CHRISTIAN DIVINITY.

## CHAPTER I.

### GOD.—HIS EXISTENCE.

The beginning of all things is God. This fundamental truth the Scriptures declare distinctly, and with power. "There is one God." And it is interesting to go often out into an exploration of the works of God, for living confirmations of his blessed word. "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead."

Indulge your thoughts in meditation, and you are impressed with the evidence of power, pre-existent, and all-controlling. You awake into being without your own volition, and by the operation of a law mysterious as existence itself, which no man instituted. You breathe and you see, by mechanisms which you contrived not, and which you can never understand. Your lungs are inflated by an atmosphere which you formed not; and you are warmed and enlightened by a sun which you did not create. Regardless of your consent, you are driven through space a thousand miles every hour by the earth's diurnal rotation; and more than sixty-eight thousand miles an hour by its

annual revolution. Thus you are plunged into the darkness of night; and anon you are roused with the brightness of day. And thus you are driven to your firesides by the freezing cold of Winter; and you are again called forth to the airy field by the enlivening warmth and the cheering song of Spring. You can plant, to be sure, and you can sow; but you could never have contrived a seed with vegetative power, nor will the winds and rains obey orders from you. The grain you sow, and the grass upon which your cattle feed, grow by a process which you could never have contrived, and which your boasted powers of reason are unable to copy.

When you commence your existence, it is under circumstances of which you have no control; and you are conscious of being, to a great extent, disposed of through life by powers not your own. And when your boasted selves go hence, and your mortal powers lie motionless in death, no wheel in nature stops for want of you;—the power which brought you here, and upheld you here a season, moves on its mighty works when you are gone.

But *unseen power* is not *all* the invisible essence, which the mind discovers in the works of nature. *Intelligence* is no less manifest than power. We see design in the things around us. And design involves counsel; and counsel involves intelligence.

In the agreement of parts in nature, and the adaptation of things to certain useful ends, we have demonstrative proof of counsel and design. For what purpose does the earth perform its annual ecliptic circuit around the sun? It is to bring about the pleasing and profitable variety of seasons. And for what purpose does the earth revolve daily on its axis? It is to pro-

duce the necessary interchange of day and night. And to furnish this regular and frequent interchange of day and night, is precisely as a world must have been planned, to be a fit abode of such creatures as inhabit our globe. We need frequent seasons of repose in sleep; and the darkness of night is adapted to our want. How much better suited to the purpose of quiet and refreshing sleep is the sable darkness, which hushes all the world to silence and sleep at once, than would be the glare of perpetual day, with the world in bustle all around. And how kindly for man is the arrangement, fixing for him his seasons of rest, rather than that he, anxious to push his labors forward, should have been left to select for himself. A further purpose of good is answered by the interchange of day and night, in the healthful coolness of the atmosphere, and the refreshment afforded vegetation. The coolness combines with the darkness of the evening to invite us to rest; and the freshness combines with the light of the morning to urge us again to labor.

Another pleasing manifestation of design, proving the existence of an intelligent Being to calculate, is in the construction of the atmosphere. It is so contrived as to break the rays of the sun into a pleasant light and genial warmth, to supply us with breath and convey sound; and also to buoy up vapors, and discharge them in gentle showers upon the earth's surface. If it were not for this element, contrived just as it is, it would have been in vain that we were furnished with such wonderfully constructed lungs, for we could not have breathed;—it would have been in vain that we were furnished with such curiously organized ears, for we could not have heard;—it would have been in vain that eyes were given us, for we could not have seen;—

and it would have been in vain that the seeds of all trees and herbs were in the ground, for they could not have been watered by fructifying showers, nor warmed by genial suns. Nor *with* this mysterious element, could light, or heat, or showers have blessed us, if there had been no sun to operate upon it. What a wonderful calculation upon ends, and unerring adaptation of means!

See also the proof of counsel and design, in the correspondence between the wants of all sentient creatures, and the provisions which are furnished for their sustenance. Every creature finds a provision furnished, which agrees with its constitutional wants; and the form of its body, and of all its members, is accommodated to its use in procuring the provision required.

Why have there not been animals brought into being, with constitutional wants that have no corresponding provision? And why has it not happened that the construction of the bodies and limbs of animals was incompatible with the climate they were made to inhabit, and unsuitable for use in supplying their natural wants? Why had not the raindeer, who loves upon hard sharp hoofs to prance over fields of ice, the soft flagging feet of the tropical camel? Why had not the lion that roars for his prey, the hoofs and the teeth of the domestic horse? Why had not the ox, whose stomach craves the herbs and grass of the field, the neck and the mouth of the fishes of the sea? And why had not the lungs, or the substitute for lungs, of the fishes of the sea, been placed in the winged and plumed bodies of the fowls of the air? Why no such incongruities? Why, even in those things which derive their existence from proximate

sources independent of each other, is there such precise and adaptable agreement, wherever such agreement is needful? It is because there is a GOD, answers reason, whose wisdom and understanding planned, when his power produced these things.

Surely that man must be in a strange delirium, who imagines that all this agreement of parts in the universal whole, and this wise adaptation of means to the production of useful and needful ends, is brought about by a power as blind and senseless as the abstract whirlwind. While he laughs at credulity, a blind credulity is his only faith. He is blind to the evidence of truth, and believes the harder side. For the existence of intelligence to plan and direct in what we call the works of nature, is as evident as that there is power to produce. We can as clearly see that things exist for certain definite purposes, as that they exist at all.

But I cannot find in all creation a stronger impress of the Creator's wisdom, than in you, for whom I pen these cogitations. Every bone, muscle, sinew, nerve, artery, vein, in your bodies, is jointed, placed and strung, precisely as it should be for the purposes of life and motion, suited to your mode of being and sphere of action. And the senses are exactly adapted to the purposes of enjoyment. When I consider the consummate wisdom and skill in the construction of the organs of *taste*, by which we test the quality of the sustenance received, and derive pleasure from the mandication of the food we eat;—and in the organs of *smell*, by which we detect what is unsavory before we receive it, and are delighted with the fragrance of sweet spices and flowers;—and of *sight*, by which we direct our steps in safety, and survey the delightful

beauties and glories of creation around us;—of *hearing*, to hold sweet social converse, and to feast upon the harmony of sounds, and the rich tones of friendship and love;—and especially when I consider the construction of the MIND, to reason and judge on what you hear and see, to store up the abundant treasures of knowledge, truth and virtue, and to "look through nature up to nature's God,"—I exclaim with the Psalmist, "The *fool* hath said in his heart, there is no God." Surely "the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead."

St. Paul speaks of *feeling after and finding God* He who habitually disciplines his mind and moral affections, by the study of the word and works of God, and the communion of his spirit, will acquire the power to perceive the being and enjoy the presence of the eternal Father.

## CHAPTER II.

### GOD AS THE CREATOR.

In the foregoing chapter, we have recognized the being of God, as it is declared in the Scriptures, and attested by the voice of nature. This second chapter is substantially a continuation of the same subject,—relating to God, however, more directly as the Creator of the world, and especially of man.

The Scripture teachings of God's authorship of the world and its furniture, are put forth in the simple authority of truth. There is no shade of doubtfulness, no fear of contradiction. As a truth known of God, and belonging to man, the inspired witnesses utter it in sublime assurance. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." "So God made man in his own image." "And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth."

But this Bible doctrine in relation to the origin of our race, some are disposed to question, even to cast away. And what better account do they give us? None. When they discard the Bible testimony, they are lost. Their folly becomes manifest, and their confusion is pitiable. Yes; after all the vain contradictions of men, the Bible account of the origin of man is the only philosophical, as well as the only authenticated account, attained or attainable. Go and examine all the *guesses* of skeptics, who, in their proud haste to make a masterly leap above the weakness of credulity, plunge from rational faith into the merest

credulity itself. How will they account for the beginning of our race?

Sometimes they will say that the human species was without beginning, existing from eternity. Was there ever then a first pair, male and female, who are self-existent, and without beginning? Then they had existed from eternity when they first had an issue; and being self-existent, they had a necessary and independent being, immortal of course, and are somewhere in existence now. Where are they? They are not transported to any other world,—for such a change of worlds would require a miracle;—and in miracles the skeptic has no belief. They must be somewhere on the earth, an eternity old! and we should be pleased to see them. They are of course flesh and blood, objects of sight; and we crave an introduction to that first man and woman, who were without beginning, self-existent, and independent!

No; they will not finally admit that there was a first pair, or any individual, without beginning. It is the species, the succession of individuals, and not a single individual, that was without beginning. But this hypothesis explodes itself. If there was no individual self-existent from eternity, then every individual of the human race had a beginning. And if every individual of our species had a beginning, then the whole race had a beginning. So, also, if the whole race had a beginning, there was a first individual, or first pair, that began to be. How did they begin? This question returns upon us.

We know that the first man must have been produced in a manner different from the present descent of one generation from another preceding; for the first man had no preceding generation of men to produce

him. To say that the first pair were produced by the rich mud of Egypt, is too silly to bespeak the sincerity of those who assert it. Honorable minded man! So ambitious of the credit of denying the existence and creative agency of God, as to ascribe thine own noble being to the original creation of the senseless mud of Egypt! Go, then, take of the Egyptian clay, and in filial homage worship it,—for it is thy Creator.

But if the fermentation of senseless matter, or any natural operation of the laws of the material world, produced the first human being, why does not the same cause produce such beings now? Should a wild man be found in the woods, would infidels believe that he had grown up out of the ground with the trees and shrubs? or that an accidental concurrence of atoms had formed him? They would scout the thought. They do not, in fact, believe that there is power in senseless matter to work out such results.

Let your thoughts dwell for a moment on the idea of unconscious matter going at work to create a human being. The particles which are requisite for the purpose come together, and form a skeleton of bones, providing such pieces, all in their due form, as are requisite for the head, body and limbs,—and all measured and jointed, and perfectly adapted to the future motion and convenience of the wonderful creature that is about to be. But these can never be of service, unless there are ropes and cords provided for moving them; and so another description of particles comes out from the arcana of nature, and they form themselves into tough and elastic cords, adapted in size and strength to the stations they are to take,—and they string around this skeleton of bones, fastening themselves here and there; and where bands at the

joints are needful to keep them in place, new particles volunteer their service to form bands where they are required; and where loops are wanted, through which for the cords to pass in order to draw the bones in the right direction, other particles come up and form such loops, taking care that they shall be so adjusted as to give the pulleys free and effective action by them. But these cords cannot serve their purpose without a moving process; and so another troop of particles volunteer themselves, and form into muscles, which take their stations so as to draw the ropes in the required directions, and assume such size in the different stations, as their labor in such stations may demand. And now another provision must be had. When the skeleton of bones is strung with cords, and these, properly banded and looped, are bedded and hitched in muscles,—and these, furthermore, are all wrapped and secured in a beautiful covering of skin, there must be some method of communicating motion to the muscles, and impelling them to draw the ropes in the desired direction. For this purpose a more subtle class of particles combine,—all senseless matter, no intelligence, no power of designing,—they happen to fall together in such a manner as to produce a sensorium and will, a will to command the motion of the muscles in every part of the system, with an authority to be obeyed. But to give action even to the will which commands the muscles, the blood must be provided, and circulation given it; and a breathing apparatus must be furnished,—and life, which none of these particles themselves possess, must be given this organized body. For the breathing apparatus can neither give life, nor act without it. Its action is a means of perpetuating life in the system, but it cannot give it.

When the life is gone from the body, no inflation of the lungs with air can restore it. Yet this lifeless, senseless matter, which happened to come together in the formation of this wonderful structure of the first man, gave it life;—and in addition to other wonderful contrivances too numerous to mention here, gave to this new made creature the wonderful faculty of intelligence and reason!

Think, kind reader, of all this being done solely by dead unconscious matter, with no intelligence to plan, to design and superintend it. Who believes it? Who is so weakly credulous, or so madly infatuated?

And when this noble being is formed, he is alone; and though he has social faculties and wants, he must remain alone while he lives; and when he dies, leave the world unpeopled again, unless the same sort of senseless matter goes on creating others like him,—or else happens to combine together in the establishment of some other cause for the multiplication and perpetuity of his species. And so we must believe, if we will get along without a Creator, that about the same time this first man was forming without a former, out of unconscious matter, another set of particles was happening, all without any intelligence in the universe to design it, to be getting together in the formation of another intelligent being, constituted female, to be a companion and help-meet for the man. And having thus provided, in the constitution of this first pair, for the peopling of the whole earth, here this mindless matter leaves its work, and never happens to produce such beings in this primitive manner again!

Surely no person can be stupid enough to believe, upon reflection, in a position so absurd and ridiculous. And hard must be the labor of that infatuated mind,

which has so strange a desire to orphanize the universe, as to purposely hide away from the light of truth, which is shining before and behind him, above and below, and on his right hand and left, in every object he looks upon, and in every subject on which he holds converse.

But we will return to the immovable position of the Bible, where the mind finds rest and satisfaction. There must be something self-existent, and without beginning. And it is as easy to conceive of self-existent mind, as of self-existent matter. Indeed, that alone of which you can conceive as unbeginning, is that which, like space itself, is all-pervading and unchanging, and whose existence is not composed of measured parts, or successive revolutions. And when we have received the fact of one self-existent GOD, an unbeginning all-pervading MIND, there appears no longer any thing strange in all the wonderful and glorious works which are constantly going on in the universe around us. Without this faith, every day, hour and minute presents us with a succession of unaccountable and distracting wonderments. But in the faith of God the Creator, all are accounted for in the wisdom and power of Jehovah. The existence of our glorious world, with the adaptedness, order, and utility of its parts; and of the various creatures which live and move on the earth, with the nicely planned structure of their bodies, their powers and capacities suited to their states and natures, and the corresponding provisions adapted to their wants; for all these things the divine Greatness is an adequate cause. Yes; when we consider our own wonderful existence, the thousands of exact contrivances in our system, all combined being necessary to make us what we are;

and when we reflect that there must have been a first pair, male and female, brought into being in a manner different from the present natural descent of our species, even by the immediate creation of almighty Intelligence, we come home with satisfaction to the Bible affirmation:—"*So God created man in his own image; in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it.*" "*He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth.*"

While the Bible gives us the only rational and authentic account of the origin of our race, the *time* which it assigns for that origin is also confirmed by every argument which is deducible from known and historical facts. We know that within our own recollection, there have been important improvements made in the arts. From this we perceive that the human mind is naturally on the stretch for discovery and inventions, and that if our race had been here from eternity, or for millions of ages, the progress of improvements would have gone far in advance of the present. Indeed, the very idea of improvements in a race of beings, leads us to trace them back to a beginning. And when we go into authentic history, and see what improvements have been added by the present generation, and subtract them from the sum total of human attainments, we see the civilized world of the preceding age to be so much lower. And thus we go downward as we trace backward. And by every authentic source of information, we trace the human species downward, back of all improvements, to a

state of simple nature, by the time we get to the date of creation as given us by the Scriptures.

I know that some have atttempted an argument from certain figures which have been found in Egypt and China, purporting to be dates running far back of the Bible chronology. But it has been made evident by learned researches, that the pretences which the Egyptians made to antiquity, so far back of the time recorded in the Scriptures, proceeded in part from their calculating by lunar years or months; and probably in part from their reckoning the dynasties of their kings in succession, which were cotemporary. For Herodotus mentions twelve Egyptian kings as reigning at one time; which, if reckoned by an ignorant or a designing chronologist as reigning in succession, would make a vast difference in dates. They had such different accounts, however, of chronology, that, as it is affirmed, some of them computed about thirteen thousand years more than others, from the original of their dynasties to the time of Alexander the Great.* Indeed, there are numerous confutations, which I have not time to recite, of the Egyptians' fabulous pretensions to antiquity. They have nothing authentic reaching back so far as the time assigned by Moses for the creation of our first progenitors.

The same remarks in general will apply also to the pretensions of the *Chinese.* Indeed, they themselves confess, that their antiquities are in great part fabulous; and they acknowledge that their most ancient books were in hieroglyphics, which were not expounded by any one who lived nearer than one thousand seven hundred years to the first author of them;

* Horne's Introduction, vol. 1, p. 173.

and that the numbers in computation are sometimes mistaken, or that months are put for years.

Finally, as I said before, we get back to a point, by running back in any channel of authentic information, by the time we have gone back six thousand years. From beyond that period there has no improvement, no trace of an earlier age been handed along to us. How wonderfully does this circumstance confirm the Bible account of the beginning of our improvable race, and of the *time* of such beginning.

Suppose a number of boys are taken in early childhood and placed upon an uninhabited island, in such circumstances that they can just make a shift to sustain themselves till they grow up to manhood. They have no recollection of any human beings but themselves, and they know nothing of birth or of death. When they have obtained a knowledge of the island in which they live, including the growth and decay of plants and trees, and have acquired the habit of reasoning, they start the question of their origin. One suggests that they were in being from eternity; and another, that they had a beginning, and that at no very distant period. Here they join issue. The former has no other argument to offer than that they do not *know* their beginning. The latter argues from the following facts:—They perceive that they have been advancing in stature, in strength, and in knowledge. They have marks upon their walls which designate the height of their stature as they were a few years ago,—not half their present height,—and they remember when they were quite small and weak, and could not understand nor do what they can at the present time. So they trace back the retrograde of their growth and improvements, to smaller and smaller things in relation to

themselves, until their recollection is lost in the confused indistinctness of earliest childhood. From these facts he argues, and that conclusively, that in some way or other, and at a time not far from the termination of their recollection in the littleness of their stature and experience, they had a beginning.

What is true of the boys in the case supposed, is true of the human race as a species,—substituting history, and the monuments of art, for the boys' memory. We find the human race improvable and improved. We trace back the retrograde of their improvements to days of smaller and smaller things, until we find our race in a rude, unimproved, infantile state, and profane history is lost in confusion. And all this is within the compass of the last six thousand years. This is not only decisive argument for the doctrine, which nothing but extreme madness and folly can dispute, that our race had a beginning; but it is also strongly confirmative of the *date* to which the Bible assigns such beginning. How strangely in love with darkness must that mind be, which will discard the Mosaic account of the creation of our species, because it assigns such creation to so recent a date, when every circumstance which has a bearing on the subject confirms this date,—and you cannot, by any authentic channel of information, step a foot beyond it.

But some have thought that even the Bible account implies that there were people on the earth before Adam and Eve. For when there was only recorded the creation of Adam and Eve, and the birth of Cain and Abel, we read of Cain's murdering Abel, and then of his being afraid lest every one finding him should slay him. "And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should slay him." "Who was there,"

it has been triumphantly asked, "for Cain to be afraid of, since Abel, the only other progeny, was dead, and he was left alone with his parents?" In answer, I demand to be informed, what is the evidence that Cain was then the only surviving child of his parents? This very account of Moses implies that the progeny of Adam and Eve had, by that time, become somewhat numerous. There are but five chapters of Genesis devoted to the first fifteen hundred years. Of course nothing more was attempted than to touch upon some prominent features of the history, some important links in the chain of events, from the creation to the flood. The birth of only such persons is recorded, as are made the subjects of some remark, or as stand in the direct line of genealogy. The language of Moses recognizes the fact, that much transpired which he did not record. His language is, "And *in process of time* it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground," &c. "*In process of time* it came to pass;" which is as much as to say, a considerable term of time, and series of events, passed in their course, which I do not record. Adam was one hundred and thirty years old when Seth was born, which was soon after the death of Abel. Accordingly there had been nearly one hundred and thirty years, more than half the age of the oldest North American civilized settlement, for the posterity of Adam to multiply, and spread out upon the face of the earth, when Cain, in guilty despair, was afraid of summary vengeance from his neighbors.

It has also been asked, "If there were no people on the earth but Adam and Eve, with their posterity, how did Cain get him a wife in the land of Nod?" The record does not say that he did. People have read

carelessly. It speaks of Cain's departing, and going into the land of Nod, and of an event there in relation to his wife, in a manner implying that his wife constituted a member of his family before. The word *Nod* signifies *vagabond;* a name, of course, which the country did not bear before, but which was given it on account of this vagabond settling in it. It was probably an unsettled tract, where, with his own family, he sought seclusion.

Some have thought that the different statures and complexions of men in different parts of the world, argue against their common origin, as of one blood, proceeding from one progenitor. But I am sure that this objection will not hold. The difference of features and complexion can be rationally accounted for, by the influence of climate and circumstances, affecting the complexion and the phrenological developments. Or, if some of the most strongly marked differences should be thought to require a special interposition of the divine agency, to make certain means effect the change, it is more philosophical to suppose that such divine agency was in such manner interposed, than that as many first pairs were created out of the earth. Reason concurs with the Scriptures, in tracing back the descent of human kind all to one original stock—so that, notwithstanding there are different complexions, we shall view all men as members of one family, all blood relations, bound to regard each other with fraternal affection.

## REFLECTIONS.

Finally, after all the war of words, the Bible stands on an immovable basis of truth. Composed of writings

which run through more than 4000 years, interwoven freely and unreservedly with names of persons and places, and with dates, and histories, it has borne the strictest scrutiny—the rigid scrutiny of foes as well as friends—and it stands unrefuted—nay, *confirmed*. It waxes stronger and wears brighter by use. If there has been any seeming advantage gained of it, it has been by misrepresentation. It comes up from the wars of ages, waving its banners of triumph, and shining in divine beauty and glory. It contains a chain of prophecies, whose consistency and fulfilment attest their divinity; and it inculcates a system of faith and morals, whose internal harmony and excellence, and whose wonderful adaptedness to the comfort and the moral perfectness of man, prove it to be the workmanship, the provision, of the same God who has constituted the human mind to need it.

I was filled with admiration for the value of the Scriptures, when, some time since, I stepped into our Supreme Court to listen a few moments to a plea of one of the leading enemies of the Bible, who was on trial for profanity and obscenity. In censuring the bad spirit which he thought was manifested by the prosecuting officer of government, he took occasion to contrast it with the spirit and precepts of said officer's professed Master. So he is constrained to resort to Jesus Christ, or to his religion, as the standard of moral perfectness. How strangely is that man set at work, to be employing misrepresentation, and every art, to ridicule, and, if possible, overthrow, that system of religion unto which he is forced to go, when he would refer to a perfect standard of moral goodness! Surely he must be like Milton's fallen angels, seeking to get revenge on mankind, because of his own disappointment. He would

rob us of our highest good, and in return, give us—*nothing*.

We consent not to the exchange. We take to our hearts the word of God. You that are aged, it is the stay and solace of your declining years. You that are in the active prime of manhood, its principles cheer and animate you in your labors, inspire and bless you in your duties, and add a high zest to all your pure enjoyments. You that are young, the teachings of this sacred Book distill the refreshing dews of grace and virtue into your expanding, blooming minds, and nourish there those rich principles of faith and love, which shall yield you the sure harvest of peace and joy now and in after years.

"Here the Redeemer's welcome voice
Spreads heavenly peace around;
And life and everlasting joys
Attend the blissful sound.

O may these heavenly pages be
Our study and delight;
And still new beauties may we see,
And still increasing light."

## CHAPTER III.

### THE CHARACTER OF GOD.

We have said that the beginning of all things is God. But the value of God to the universe, the foundation of all human confidence, and the reason of human praise, is his *character*. None, therefore, will be reluctant to give devout attention to this subject, with an earnest, child-like simplicity of heart. There are certain intellectual and physical attributes of God, which I shall here set forth, but not dwell upon, because they are understood and conceded by all theists.

First;—God is possessed of infinite Knowledge. The comprehensive knowledge of the Deity is expressed in the Scriptures in various ways. The prophet says, (1 Sam. ii. 3:) "For the Lord is a God of knowledge, and by him are actions weighed." Job expresses the idea of unlimited knowledge in God, by a challenge to all men to give him instruction. (Job xxi. 22:) "Shall any teach God knowledge?" Again, (Job xi. 8,) the boundless extent of the Divine knowledge is represented thus: "It is as high as heaven; what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, (sheol, or the unknown depths;) what canst thou know?" St. Paul said, (Acts xv. 18,) "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world."

The unbounded knowledge or omniscience of God, is involved in his omnipresence. And his omnipres-

ence is beautifully expressed by the psalmist in the following poetic manner. (Psalm cxxxix. 7—10:) "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in hell, (*sheol*,) behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand uphold me."

But I need not weary the reader with the multiplication of proofs, on a point which is not disputed; and I will close this section of my work, with the admirable description of the Divine omniscience furnished by Dr. Clarke. "Omniscience, or *the power to know all things*, is an attribute of God, and exists in him as *omnipotence*, or the power to do all things. * * God cannot have *fore-knowledge*, strictly speaking, because this would suppose that there was something *coming*, in what we call *futurity*, which had not yet *arrived* at the *presence of the Deity*. Neither can he have any *after-knowledge*, strictly speaking, for this would suppose that something that *had taken* place, in what we call *pretereïty*, or *past time*, had now got *beyond* the *presence of the Deity*. As God exists in all that can be called *eternity*, so he is *equally* everywhere: nothing can be *future* to him, because he lives in all *futurity:* nothing can be past to him, because he equally exists in all *past time:* futurity and pretereïty are relative terms to us; but they can have no relation to that God who dwells in every point of eternity,—with whom all that is *past*, all that is *present*, and all that is *future* to man, exists in one infinite, indivisible, and eternal NOW." (See Clarke on Acts ii. 23.)

Second;—God is infinitely *Wise*. "Blessed be the

name of the Lord forever, for wisdom and might are his." "O Lord, how manifold are thy works; in wisdom hast thou made them all." (Ps. civ. 24. Dan. ii. 20.) "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" (Rom. xi. 33.)

Wisdom and knowledge, are, perhaps, generally looked upon as synonymous terms. But they are doubtless more accurate who consider them as distinct. "Knowledge consists in having a stock of proper ideas and notions of things; wisdom consists in reducing these to practice, in conducting any affair with ingenuity and skill." Therefore as God possesses infinite knowledge and wisdom, he knows perfectly well what is best to be done, and has ability or skill to contrive such a system, to institute such arrangements, and to put things into such orderly and harmonious operation, as to secure the desired and intended ultimatum.

Third;—God hath almighty *Power*. To Abraham he said, "I am the almighty God." (Gen. xvii. 1.) "God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this, that power belongeth to God." (Ps. lxii. 11.) "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number: he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one faileth." "Who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out heaven with a span, and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance? All nations before him are as nothing; and they are counted to him as less than nothing, and vanity." (Isa. xl.) "And he doeth according to his

will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth; and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?" (Dan. iv. 35.) "I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me; declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done; saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure." (Isa. xlvi. 9, 10.) "Who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." (Eph. i. 11.)

Thus far we find the character of God to be such as to inspire us with profoundest awe. *Omniscient* and *all-wise;* his discernment is present in all time and space, and comprehends all past, present, and future events. And his *wisdom* plans all things, for "all things are of God," and arranges them for successful operation. And his omnipresent, all-pervading, almighty *power*, works for him, grasping an infinite variety of means, adapted to the countless natures, relations, forms and manners, of the works and operations he designs. In humble submission we bow to the force of his word by the prophet, "*I will work, and who shall let it?*" (Isa. xliii. 13.)

But while we stand in wonder, amazement, and awe profound, in contemplating the vastness of the Divine intelligence, and wisdom, and power, there is yet a feature in the Divine character which must be especially considered, as the only foundation of confidence, love and praise. Wisdom and might alone cannot render a being an object of trust. Without moral principle, that wisdom may be a fiendish cunning, and that power the executor of fiendish malevolence. Hence the importance of the divine *moral attributes.* We will proceed then to expatiate,—

Fourth;—On the *Righteousness* of God. This fea-

ture of the Divine character is the most constantly and conspicuously held forth in the Scriptures, as the chief corner-stone in Bible theology. And the righteousness, the mercy and the goodness of the Lord, are always urged as the reason or ground of trust, and love and praise. "O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and his wonderful works to the children of men." "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever." "O praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise him, all ye people. For his merciful kindness is great towards us; and the truth of the Lord endureth forever." "How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! therefore do the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings." "God is love." "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us." "We love him, because he first loved us."

And here let it be remarked, that when the Scriptures ascribe goodness, or love, to God, they mean the same quality, or principle, as that which is attributed, by the same terms, to man. Some have conceived of such a difference between the moral qualities expressed by these terms, when applied to God, and when applied to man, as to make them even opposite principles. When we have objected to a certain purpose which they ascribe to God, on the ground that it is shocking to every principle of benevolence, and that the execution of it would forever mar and even destroy the happiness of heaven, they have urged that if we are saints, when we become inhabitants of heaven we shall not be pained by witnessing distress in others, for we shall then get rid of these human feelings of tenderness, and *shall be like God!* If it were so, the terms *righteousness*,

*goodness* and *love*, applied to God, were unmeaning words. They express nothing which our moral sense, in this world, has any power to conceive of. Then they who profess to "praise God for his *goodness*," are doing homage to, they "know not what," and are as those who worshipped an "*unknown God*."

But it is not so. The spirit of cold indifference to a brother's or a child's sufferings, is even more ungodly and unheavenly, than it is inhuman. The Scriptures estimate that loving-kindness, that pure benevolence, which feels for others' sorrows, and labors always for their good, as the perfection of the Christian life, and a oneness of spirit with God. "But love your enemies, and do good, * * and ye shall be the children of the highest; for he is kind unto the unthankful and the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful." (Luke vi. 35, 36.) "Be ye followers of God as dear children." (Eph. v. 1.) "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good unto them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you; that you may be the children of your Father which is in heaven. * * Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. v. 44—48.) "Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." (Eph. iv. 32.) "Love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is love." "And he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God and God in him." (1 John iv.)

Hence it is seen that the more kindly sympathetic, tender-hearted, and benevolent a man is, the more he is like God; and that the love of God to his creatures

is a living, active spirit of affectionate good will, desiring and seeking their highest ultimate good. How sublime, then, in this light of divine goodness, is the Scripture asseveration, that "The Lord is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works."

Some may conclude that I have now said enough to make myself understood on this part of my subject. But I am far from believing that such is the fact. I do not believe that all my readers yet fully understand the nature and magnitude of the last stated sentiment. Nor, as I have intimated before, do *all.* Christians *virtually agree* in ascribing such a character to God. In *form* they will do this. They will say that God is a being of *infinite benevolence.* But there are many who only use the expression from habit, without intending to convey the meaning which it truly bears. They do not mean that God exercises a sincere and ever-active interest for the ultimate good of all his offspring. They believe that he has introduced into being millions of rational creatures, to be abandoned to the sport of endless and excruciating torments. This could never be the work of *goodness.* To ascribe such works to God, and yet say that he is an infinitely *good* being, sounds to us no less absurd than saying, that while there is a quality in the climate of the frigid zone to make *perpetual ice*, it is yet an extremely *hot* and *torrid* climate. It is to break down all distinction between love and hatred, and to confound benevolence with cruelty. If there could be such a principle as *infinite malignity*, and it had at its command creative power, for what purpose more cruel, more perfectly malignant, could it force creatures into being, than to make their existence an infinite evil, the sport of unbounded torments?

But we are told by one class of believers in endless misery, that they do not ascribe to God so bad a disposition, as to say that he has *created* any for such a *purpose*, that they should be sufferers of such an evil:—but they will *bring it on themselves*. And we have no right, they say, to complain of God for what his creatures do, though they make themselves eternal losers, infinite sufferers, by their existence. My friends, we do not find fault with God. We adore him in all his works, and in all his revealed purposes we adore him supremely. But I am endeavoring to communicate to your understandings, and impress upon your minds, the doctrine of truth concerning the moral character of God. And since the same language which I find it necessary to employ in describing the Divine character, is also used by those who differ widely from us in opinion on the Divine disposition, I find it necessary to notice the opinions of others, so far as to expose what we consider their misuse of such language. This I must do, that when *I* am describing the character of God, I may not be misunderstood.

What do those persons mean who admit that it would cast a foul stain on the Divine character to say that God has *created* men *for* endless misery, and yet contend that he will *permit* them to *plunge themselves* into the same evil? For what purpose, then, did he create them? Was it that they might be ultimately blessed? Then so it will be, for God can never be disappointed. Being of infinite knowledge, in the beginning of all his works he sees the result. And it is impossible, as we have seen, that one can seriously undertake a purpose which he knows will fail. If a part of the human family are to be finally miserable,

God had certain knowledge of it from the beginning. In this certain knowledge he brought them forth out of nonentity into being; and in the supposed state of misery he holds them up in being forever! For what *purpose* is this? With him who was infinitely happy in himself when man was not, and who saw the end from the beginning, for what purpose was it that he chose to exert his power, and force into existence those creatures, to be held up in being forever, whose existence he saw would be to them an endless curse? You may evade this question in conversation, but you cannot evade it in your own understandings.

If such a being as the world has believed in by the name of *Satan*, had creative power, and he wished to bring into existence a number of creatures to be the final prey of evil, could he but know that such would be the horrid result, what would he care whether they were to be brought into that evil by means of their own use of the agency he should give them, influenced by coöperative circumstances in the order of things which he should establish, or whether it should be brought about by his own agency more directly exerted?

I employ this plainness of speech, because I am on a subject which lies near our hearts, which we regard as of supreme importance, and which is all lost if it be misunderstood. *The moral character of God*, as I have said, is the most important subject in theology. It is the foundation of all true piety and faith, and the standard by which for us to form our own moral principles. And if any represent the *purposes*, the *government*, the *works* of God, in such a light as to deny his benevolence in *fact* and in *deed*, we care not for their ascribing goodness to him in *name*. We care not how

liberal they may profess to be, how charming to the ear may be the music of the high-sounding epithets they ascribe to God. These, while they please the ear of men, will but blind the mind to the cause of their pain and uneasiness of heart, if they are not taught to believe and trust in God's unfailing and operative goodness in all his *acts*,—in the creation, in the government, and in the final disposal of his family. However a man may ascribe, in epithet, every possible perfection to God, if his mind is entangled and befogged in such doctrines, that he cannot, in unwavering confidence, hang the safety of the universe on the arm of almighty Goodness, he has an aching void in the breast, which no earthly good, and no human doctrine, can fill and satisfy. No religious teaching which is not salted and seasoned with this principle of confidence and hope, can answer to the description of that provision of God's house, which *abundantly satisfies* the human mind.

On this point Dr. William E. Channing uses language full of just and noble sentiment. On the remark that all Christians agree in ascribing to the Supreme Being infinite justice, goodness, and holiness, he replies, "that it is very possible to speak of God magnificently, and to think of him meanly; to apply to his person high-sounding epithets, and to his government, principles that make him odious. The heathens called Jupiter the greatest and the best; but his history was black with cruelty and lust. We cannot judge of men's real views of God, by their general language, for in all ages they have hoped to soothe the Deity by adulation. We must inquire into their particular views of his purposes, of the principles of his administration, and of his disposition towards his creatures."

But it will be said "the Lord is *just* as well as *good*, and his justice, too, must be respected." True, and this is no other than the same feature of the Divine character on which we have been treating. What is justice? On this subject the mass of mankind entertain vague and chaotic views. They have made justice to be a sort of separate and adverse divinity, opposed to the other moral attributes of the deity,—a mere vindictive spirit. It was in this view of the subject that the poet Young penned the absurd line in his "Night Thoughts,"

"A God all mercy is a God unjust."

Such a sentiment must be a *night thought*, truly, black as Egyptian darkness. It sets the justice and mercy of God at variance, dividing the Divine nature against itself, and throwing the Divine attributes into strife and confusion. It makes the Creator and Governor of the world to be unjust when he is merciful, and unmerciful when he is just. The enlightened worshipper of God feels his heart to revolt at this treatment of the Divine character.

But the mind is happily freed from this thraldom of darkness, by finding that, in the Scriptures, *justice is righteousness*, and *righteousness is justice*. The two words are rendered, in all cases, from the same in the original. Where it is said the Lord is a *just* God, the same original word is used, as where we read in the translation that he is *righteous*. And so it is the same whether we read of just, or righteous men. Let the reader bear in mind then, and never forget, that justice and righteousness, in Scripture theology, are one.

And now, *What is righteousness?* In all I have

written in this chapter of the moral character of God, his goodness, mercy and love, I have been describing the constituents of his righteousness. But as this point is infinitely important, being that on which the entire body of Christian Divinity rests, and as the views entertained of it, by a large portion even of Christendom, are so exceedingly false and pernicious, I shall be excused for detaining the reader a few moments longer upon it.

In answer, then, to the inquiry, *What is righteousness?* it must be said, in truth,—It is not a mere exercise of power without a motive. Nor is it an exercise of power with an evil and unkind motive. It consists in a disposition and practice according to the principle of right. It is, in short, doing right. And doing right is doing well, and doing well is doing good. Accordingly righteousness, or justice, can never be separate from goodness.

There are such principles as real right and real wrong. And the distinction between these principles exists in the nature of things. No custom or fashion, sanctioned by the conduct of any being, however high and mighty, can destroy this distinction, so as to convert right into wrong, or wrong into right. As this distinction was never created by any previous custom, or arbitrary rule, no adopted custom or rule can do it away.

Even the *supreme Being* does not make things morally right by performing them; but he performs all things which he does, because they are right. In all his doings he recognizes the self-existent distinction between right and wrong, and he reproved not his servant Abraham for his interrogatory assertion, uttered in filial respect, that he was bound, by his own eternal

nature, *to do right. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* (Gen. xviii. 25.)

But we have said that many, even in Christendom, entertain false and harmful views on the subject of *right* as applied to the Deity. They suppose that his conduct is not directed by any principle of right as distinguished from wrong,—but that, without reference to the moral disposition with which he should act, anything which his power might perform would be right, for the sole reason that *he* had done it. And if we venture to say, that such and such principles of action would be wrong, even if they could be exercised by a supreme being, they will tell us that we have become bold blasphemers, and expose ourselves to the infinite ire of God's offended justice by entertaining the thought.

If men can in this way, by administering the bitter dregs of terror, so benumb our moral sense that we cannot perceive why anything is right which is done by the supreme Being, by any other rule than that of his having power to perform it, then we shall not be startled at their requiring of us to receive a doctrine which ascribes to God the most evil principles of action. We may then have doctrines of corrupt moral principle forced down into our minds, without producing disgust, as we might have bitter and fetid food forced down into our stomachs, if we could be first induced to use a kind of drug which would destroy our natural taste.

On this principle concerning right in a supreme being, that it consists merely in the power and sovereign will to do an action, without regard to moral disposition,—suppose there were, as some heathen philosophers have believed, two self-existent supreme beings,

of equal powers, but opposite moral dispositions. How would you decide which was right and which was wrong? How would you know which to call the *good*, and which the *evil* being? Would you say the two gods being of opposite moral dispositions, the one who was benevolent towards the creatures of the universe, seeking their highest good, is the *good* being, —and the other, the *cruel* god who seeks the real evil of the creatures of the universe, is the *evil* being? That the former is *right*, and the latter *wrong*? By what rule would you come to such a conclusion? Would you say the *moral disposition* of the former is *good*, and that of the latter is *bad*? That the moral disposition of the former is *right*, and that of the latter is *wrong*? But your rule which we are now considering will not help you to any such decision. According to this rule, you are not to judge concerning *right* in a supreme being by consideration of his moral disposition. Anything is right which he may have the power and sovereign will to do. And in the case now supposed of two supreme deities, though their moral dispositions and actions are opposite, they both alike have the power and sovereign will to do whatever they perform. Then if *power* and *will* make *right*, they are both equally right, equally good, equally lovely, though one is the almighty *friend*, and the other the almighty *foe* of the universe of creatures! One is as morally right as the other, though one is infinitely *malevolent*, and the other infinitely *benevolent*, because both alike do what they have the power and will to do!

It is upon this principle of making right to consist in power, that all tyrants have proceeded, when they have been striving for the diadem of glory, through

works of oppression, destruction and ruin, among mankind. Adopting this principle concerning goodness and right, suppose you go to a virtuous republican and Christian, and pronounce before him the following encomiums on some earthly prince. "Behold the evidences of his high regard to moral right. He has wrested from the hands of the people their hard earnings, and reduced them to poverty. He has taken from them their liberties, and made them slaves. And for his amusement he brings large numbers before him, and in various ways puts them to torture and to death. See his mighty deeds of blood and carnage; hear the groans of distress from his oppressed people; and in view of such stupendous acts of *goodness*, must you not be struck with a sense of his pure love of moral right?" Surely the republican and Christian to whom you should deliver such harangue, would hear you, with disgust, calling *cruelty goodness*, and *power right*.

But the heathen philosophers before referred to, who held to two supreme beings of opposite moral dispositions, exercised common sense enough to make a distinction between right and wrong. They knew that nothing but benevolence was goodness, and that nothing but goodness was right. Accordingly, their deity who was supposed to be full of benevolence, seeking the greatest good of all creatures, they called the *good* deity; and his moral disposition they regarded as the only true standard of moral right. They knew also that cruelty, malevolence, a disregard to the good of mankind, was bad, was wrong. Accordingly, their deity who was supposed to be malevolent, to seek the real injury of mankind, they called the *evil* deity; and to imitate him they consid-

ered morally wrong. Thus they made a just distinction between right and wrong.

Such distinction we must make when we consider the ways of God, or else we cannot do him honor. To say that we would adore a disposition in a supreme being to do infinite injury to mankind, as being just as right and praiseworthy as a disposition to do them infinite good, is the same as to say that we would adore a character directly opposite to God, as being just as right and praiseworthy as God himself. It would be seen then that we had no supreme respect to the Divine Being, since we should profess that we would respect an opposite character as much as we respect the character which he sustains.

We cannot render to God acceptable honor, unless we have a settled and enlightened disposition to respect only the principle of *moral right*. If such a disposition we possess, we shall respect and adore the God and Judge of heaven and earth, in proportion as we obtain a knowledge of his ways. For he will in all cases do right. He will not require us to regard *any* thing as right which his *power* might be able to perform, or which makers of religious creeds may say he will perform. Nor will he require us to regard what he does perform as right, merely because he performs it, without our first understanding that all which he does, he does because it *is* right,—because it tends to the greatest good of his creatures.

The interrogation made by Abraham recognizes a necessary principle of right as self-existent with God, by which he will regulate all his doings. "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Though Abraham uttered this inquiry with reference to a particular occasion, yet it is founded on a principle

which is of universal application. In all cases God will do right. In the administration of rewards and punishments he will do right; and in all the plans and operations of his government he will do right. "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face."[a]

[a] Ps. lxxxix. 14.

## CHAPTER IV.

GOD AS THE LAWGIVER.—NATURE AND DESIGN OF THE LAW.

I. LAW is the principle or rule of action, whether it relates to mind or matter. "The invariable tendency or determination of any species of matter to a particular form with definite properties, and the determination of a body to certain motions, changes, and relations, which uniformly take place in the same circumstances, is called a *physical law*. *Laws of animal nature* are the inherent principles by which the economy and functions of animal bodies are performed; *laws of vegetation*, the principles by which plants are produced."[a] *Moral law*, is that which prescribes the duty of man to God, to himself, and to his fellow-creatures. And this, like the others, has its foundation in the nature and relations of things. The moral law, comprising the principles and reasons from which proceed the moral duties and obligations of men, is inwrought with the constitution of human nature. And as the health and perfectness of the plant require the regular and harmonious action of all the principles which conduce to vegetative life, so the health and perfectness of our moral nature depend upon the harmonious action of the will and affections, with the foresaid principles of the moral law.

The written law of God is but a revelation of the said constitutional law, as the mathematician's written rules are a revelation of preëxisting mathematical truths. This revelation was needful to mankind, to

[a] Noah Webster.

give them sure knowledge of those principles, both of duty and happiness, to which their natural ignorance blinded them, and from which conflicting passions and misconceptions lured them.

And now it is a fact of immense importance to be borne in mind, that the author of all these laws is GOD. Of course they are all in harmony with his other works, and are the arrangements and productions of his wisdom and goodness. Take, for instance, the *physical* law, which relates to the forms, order, and motions, in the physical universe. This law belongs to the physical system as a part of itself. It is not thrown in to thwart the general design of God, in this department of his creation, but is indispensable to the accomplishment of that design. What good purpose could have been answered by the creation of this earth, if it were not subjected to laws which secure its diurnal and annual revolutions, and the coöperation of its elements for the sustenance of animal and vegetable life? Remarks of the same import may be made of the *laws of animal nature*, and the *laws of vegetation*. They are all wisely adapted to the good purpose of God, in those respective departments of the great system of things.

And so of the *moral law*, or the law of God, peculiarly adapted to man. It is an essential part of the divine arrangement in the moral creation. Hence it is not a trap or snare, by which the Creator has contrived to catch his children in such entanglement, as he might make an occasion for doing them an infinite injury. The Being, whose character stands portrayed, and that truly, in the preceding chapter, could never have been the author of such a law,—could never have conceived so malignant a design. He, who has

made the laws of physical nature, to be so wisely adapted to the good designs of the physical system, has not failed to do as much for THE CROWNING WORK OF HIS CREATION. The law of God to man is an arrangement for carrying on his benevolent purpose in this, his highest creation. And for this God-honoring and trustful sentiment, we are not left alone to reason's inductions from the Divine character. The supreme Lawgiver has caused to be inserted in the book which reveals his law, the following explicit exposition of its spirit and design: "And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, and to fear the Lord our God, for our good always."[b]

And what other aim could the Creator have in giving laws to his children, than their good? Will you say that he aimed at the promotion of his own glory? His *essential* glory was infinite before men or angels had a being; and he was happy in his own eternal perfections. And his *declarative* glory—what is it? It is the display of his glorious perfections to the understandings of his creatures. For what object? For a mere display of himself, without regard to their good? Would you be so blasphemous as to ascribe to the Divine Being a vain pride? My blood curdles at the thought. I am horror-stricken, when I think that some men have represented that the declarative glory of God is a mere show of strength, a *sport* as it were of power, regardless of the welfare, or *inflictive*, rather, of the final evil of his children! The declarative glory of God is the display of his glorious perfections, all of which centre in his *goodness*. This display of his glory, of course, which he makes to his creatures, is, through his wise and benevolent, his wonderful and

[b] Deut. vi. 4.

glorious arrangements, designed for the promotion of his creatures' happiness. Since, therefore, the glory of God is the good of his children; to say that he aimed, in giving laws to his children, at the promotion of his own glory, is the same as to say, that he aimed at their good.

It should consequently be the chief concern of the moral teacher, to influence the people's minds in their choice of conduct, by enlightening them into a discovery of the eternal connexion between duty and happiness. This will be coming home to the very principles of their nature, and the omnipotent springs of action. They want happiness,—they love their own good;—and let them be brought out of the deceived belief that their good may be found in doing wrong, to know the reason and ground of their duties, and that they are all commanded of God, for their good always, and then their free choice of obedience will be secured. With them self-love and social love will then become the same. They will see the law of God, and their own individual happiness, and the happiness of the community in which they live, to be connected links in one golden chain, which is fastened to the throne of the Eternal.

II. To illustrate the sentiment above established, and evince more practically the goodness of God, in the institution of law for man, we will look at some of its particular requirements in their application to human life. Take the DECALOGUE, for instance, as a summary of duty to God and fellow-man.

1. The first division of the Decalogue relates to our duty to God, involving, of course, our duty to ourselves. It prohibits all idolatry, and enjoins the single

worship of the one only living and true God.[c] This is a kind provision for human improvement and happiness. It includes not the requisite *form* alone, but also the *spirit* of devotion to God. It involves supreme love, approbation and respect of the Divine character,—thankfulness for the Divine favors,—and a looking to God for direction, and for all needed good. In short, this part of the Decalogue is, by our Saviour, summed up in this, "Thou shall love the Lord thy God, with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."[d]

It is obvious to sober reflection, that the doing of this great and primary requisition of the law, must be productive of the most sublime enjoyment, the most high and exalted happiness. To put our minds to that study of evidence, by which we attain to that knowledge of God, that acquaintance with his adorable perfections, whereby we come into possession of supreme love to him, this is coming into the privilege of trusting God, and feeling safe in his care. For we can never fear harm from one we supremely love. If we love God with all the heart, we must view him in his moral character to be supremely trustworthy. Hence, the apostle's saying, "Perfect love casteth out fear," because fear hath torment. To enjoy communion with the all-pervading presence of the Deity, to worship him in spirit and in truth, to hope in his almighty goodness, and to rest confidingly in his kind paternal care, this is the chief good of man. Nothing else can equal it.

Now while the worship of the true God, in the adorable character in which he is presented in the Scriptures, as also exhibited in the preceding chapter

[c] Ex. xx. 1—7. [d] Matt. xxii. 37.

of this work, tends to such elevation of mind, and such confidence and peace, it also tends to purify the mind,—to assimilate it to the moral image of the holy object of worship. On the other hand, the worship of idols, or false gods, who are always made to partake of the corruptness of their debased inventors, both tends to a restless, perturbed state of the mind, and a downward course of human character.

Thus far, then, in the law of God, we find the kindest regard for the welfare of man.

The prohibition of *profanity* is included in that part of the law which we have noticed above; as the profane and obscene use of the name of God is an act of irreverence, and has a tendency to the growth and spread of irreverence towards God. Hence its practice and influence robs man of the supreme good above described, and violates the law of love and devotion to the Father.

The appointment of the *Sabbath*, or one day in seven for rest from ordinary labor and care, may also be included under the head of duties to God; though, like all duties to God, it involves our duties to ourselves and mankind. It is a wise and good provision for man, who is ever eager to push his worldly interests forward, that there should be a suitable time of respite, for bodily rest and mental cultivation, fixed for him by authority. And this arrangement is an indispensable means for promoting obedience to all the other commandments of the law.

2. The second division of the law relates directly to our conduct towards our fellow-men.* It requires children to honor their parents; which involves the duty of love and respect while under their care, and

* Ex. xx. 12—17.

of nourishing and sustaining their declining years. It prohibits *murder*, and *adultery*, and *theft*, and *false witness*, and all *covetousness*, that bane of social friendship and peace. All this, too, the great Teacher sums up in one word, *love*. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."[f] And this commandment he esteems as like unto the first, that of love to God. For he who loves the Lord, who is "good unto all," loves the spirit of universal goodness, and loves of course the other objects of the Father's love, his other children. So then, "he that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God,—for God is love." "And this commandment have we from him, that he who loveth God, love his brother also."[g]

Is not this commandment good for man? Picture to yourselves a neighborhood where all are walking in obedience to it. Is a neighbor distressed? Does trouble press upon his family? They all sympathize. The hand of kind affection is stretched out, the balm of consolation is applied, and the distressed are restored to joy and gladness. Is one of them prosperous? Does he receive a blessing which adds to the happiness of himself and his beloved family? They all rejoice. Being in the spirit of fraternal love, they think not to derive happiness from each other's miseries, but the happiness of each adds to that of all, and the happiness of all to that of each.

What a heavenly scene is this! Husbands and wives, parents and children, brothers and sisters, kindreds and neighbors, all bound by the strong ties of sincere affection, walking on, and aiding each other on, in the path of perfection and felicity.

Finally, you may descend to particulars, in respect

[f] Matt. xxii. 39. [g] 1 John iv. 7, 8, 21.

to all the duties involved in the principles of the divine law, and you will find them all to be necessarily connected with our best good, our highest happiness in life. Consider the duty of love and obedience to God; our duty to ourselves, to cultivate the mind, to improve ourselves in all the moral graces, and to use the good gifts of Providence in conformity with the rule of temperance in all things; and our duties to mankind, to exercise good-will to all, to be kind and forgiving, just and true, sympathetic and helpful, to strive for the general good. He who, in all these things, obeys the Creator's law, rests in cheerful hope in God. His time is occupied in some useful employment, in the business of doing good. He walks among mankind with the fearless majesty of moral integrity and truth; and his mind, the mirror of heaven, is the clear, the calm, and the pure receptacle of happiness serene, rational, abiding. His heart responds, amen, to the inspired description of wisdom's service;—"Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her, and happy is every one that retaineth her."[h]

O how miserably dark is the mind of that man who lives in violation of the Father's laws;—or of him who, though a professor of religion, declares that if it were not for his fear of foreign and extraneous punishments of infinite magnitude, he would seek his greater good in a life of sin! The serpent hath deceived him. Let him pull the scales from his eyes, just to take one sober look at the condition he aspires to. *An apostate from the worship of God, an alien from communion with the Father of mercies, neglecting the means of self-improvement, practising intemperance and self-defile-*

[h] Prov. iii. 17, 18.

*ment, living in envy and malice, hateful, false, and treacherous to mankind.* Are these the constituents of the wished-for good? They are deep, throbbing, putrid sores to human life. And if the poor, tempted soul had but open eyes to see, he would start back with horror from the moral charnel house of sin, to which his deluded steps are hastening. Then, too, on tasting the bliss which pure obedience yields, would his spirit glow with rapture in the chant of the royal poet's song, descriptive of the moral law:

"The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul;
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple;
The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes;
The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb.
Moreover by them is thy servant warned;
And in keeping of them there is great reward."[1]

This truth then is established;—that the law of God to man, is the law of a Father, instituted in wisdom and love, for the children's good. From this doctrine who dissents? None. Then none will refuse to accompany me into the subject of the succeeding chapter.

[1] Ps. xix. 7—11.

# CHAPTER V.

## PENALTIES OF THE LAW.

### SECTION I.

### *Nature and Design of the Penalties.*

We have considered the law of God to man, in its wise adaptedness and benevolent design. And we have seen and admired the reward of obedience, which consists in all those physical and moral advantages and blessings, in all that healthfulness and happiness and glory, for the production of which the law was given. And in all this we have seen renewed and multiplied manifestations of the wisdom and goodness of God, and his kind regard for his children. In this subject, indeed, we find those provisions and arrangements which involve the highest blessings which belong to the inheritance of man. For without the moral nature, which renders him a proper subject of law, and an accountable being, subject to conscious approbation or guilt according to his conduct in relation to the law, he could not have been capable of those high and sublime enjoyments, which are designed for man as the child of God.

But the law has its penalties for transgressors. In connexion with the very first instruction given to man in relation to his course of duty, he was admonished of evil as the fruit of disobedience. And now it is the purpose of this chapter to bring out into a clear light the nature and design of those penal sufferings.

And here it is safe to presume, in the outset, that the *penalties of the law* are not designed to thwart

God's purpose in the law itself. Let the reader dispense with all haste now, and think with slow, candid deliberation. For here we enter upon a subject which is at the foundation of all religious controversy in Christendom.

It has been asserted that the penalty of the law is endless punishment, to be inflicted in a future immortal state of being; and that any act of disobedience subjects man, by the rule of law, to an eternity of woe. This makes the penal part of the law to be at war with the spirit and design of the law itself. God has created man an intelligent and moral being, and given him a law adapted to his moral constitution, and kindly designed, as we have seen, for the production of happiness. He has also, for a wise purpose, placed the moral nature of man in connexion with a physical nature of such appetites and passions as subject him to various temptations and trials. And now, the doctrine which we have just named, represents, that God has annexed to his wise and good law a penalty, which, if executed according to its true intent and meaning, would, upon any act of transgression, cut man at once and forever off from all subsequent privilege of living in the very law of his moral nature, and make his endless existence an endless evil! The moment you come in contact with this item of theological belief, you feel a chill as from the touch of death, and are conscious of having passed out of the path of that true "Divinity," in which we have been walking, into the invention of a depraved human mind. That doctrine which makes the penalty of God's law to counteract the very design of the law itself, and to be the instrument of infinite ruin to his children, can have no foundation in the works and ways of the living and *true God, whose* wisdom and love are so wonderfully

evinced in the plans and arrangements of his creation.

Who of our readers, without shutting his eyes, and doing violence to his own moral sense, can dissent from this proposition,—to wit; that as the penalties are the work of the same Lawgiver, and compose a part of the legal system, which we have seen to be so wise and good, they are designed to promote the good purpose of the law? They are intended to be preventive and curative in their operation, conducing to obedience. Of course, punishment is not designed to be endless, because it is not an ultimate end of the Divine administration, but a means, looking always to an end in correction.

This wise penal arrangement of the moral law bears a striking analogy with a corresponding feature in the law of physical nature. There is an infraction of the law of physical health, by improper diet, or by a wound upon the body. This infraction is followed by physical pain. The knowledge of the connexion between such infraction and the consequent pain, tends to put men on their guard against the former; and the suffering of the pain upon the occurrence of the infraction, stimulates to the application of remedies. So far then the government of God is in harmony with itself, and with all the harmonious Divine perfections. And so we shall find a beautiful harmony running through all parts and principles of the entire body of "CHRISTIAN DIVINITY."

By an appeal to the Scriptures, we shall find the sentiment established by authority, to which the spirit of the law itself has driven us, touching the character of its penalties. For a sample of the Scripture expositions of the design of punishment, see Lev. xxvi.

14, and onward. "But if ye will not hearken unto me, and will not do all these commandments; and if ye despise my statutes, —— I also will do this unto you; I will even appoint over you terror, consumption, and the burning ague, that shall consume the eyes, and cause sorrow of heart: and ye shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it."

"*And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me,* then I will punish you yet seven times more for your sins. I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass. And your strength shall be spent in vain; for your land shall not yield her increase, neither shall the trees of the field yield their fruits." * * *

"*And if ye will not be reformed by me by these things, but will walk contrary unto me,* then I will also walk contrary unto you, and will punish you yet seven times for your sins," &c.

Here the sentiment is declared, and repeated over and over, that the sole object in view by all these inflictions of punishment was the *amendment* of the people. Punishment after punishment was to be added, in case they would not be humbled and reformed; and even when the last degree of punishment should be inflicted, and they should be broken up as a nation, and scattered abroad and trodden under foot of all nations, and they should pine away in their iniquities in their enemies' lands, it is added, (v. 40,) "If they shall confess their iniquity, and the iniquity of their fathers;—if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept the punishment of their iniquity; then will I remember my covenant with Jacob, —— I will not cast them away to destroy them utterly, —— for I am the Lord their God."

In a case where the people had become blind and stupid in their sins and sufferings, and were tending to a state of desperation, the Lord said by his prophet, (Isa. i. 5,) "Why should ye be stricken any more? Ye will revolt more and more; the whole head is sick and the whole heart is faint." Here we have the sentiment, as belonging to the principle of the Divine administration, that it is not meet that punishment should be inflicted beyond the point of its tendency to good. And in the succeeding part of the chapter last referred to, a different moral process is graciously promised, by which to affect the people's hearts with a sense of the Divine goodness, and of their own ingratitude and folly, and to turn them from their evil ways.

The cases which we have now quoted refer rather to Israel in their national capacity; but they elucidate the principle on which punishment is administered in all cases, upon nations and individuals. Though God made a special revelation of the law of duty and happiness to Israel, as he did not at the same time to other nations, yet he favored them all with such capacities and means of knowledge as to their primary duties, that they were not without law. As the apostle says, "they are a law unto themselves,—which shew the work of the law written in their hearts."[a] And the same Father is their Maker, Lawgiver and Judge. Though he is, with reference to a special covenant made for a wise purpose with Israel, often called the *God of Israel*, yet the Scriptures do not represent him as a titular deity. He is expressly declared to be the God of the whole earth;[b] the God of the spirits of all flesh;[c] the *Creator* of the heavens and the earth, and all things in them;[d] the Judge

[a] Rom. ii. 14, 15.
[b] Isa. liv. 5.
[c] *Num. xvi. 22.*
[d] Gen. i. Acts xvii. 24.

among the nations.[e] And with regard to the primitive dispensations of his law over all men, they are of the same benevolent character as those described as having primary reference to Israel. The royal psalmist, in view of Jehovah's administration of law in general, was inspired to sing, "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, for thou renderest unto every man according to his work."[f] So clearly did the psalmist view the penalties of the law to be merciful in their spirit and design. If he had been contemplating the execution of such relentless vengeance as should make countless millions of God's children curse him, and curse their own existence, howling eternity away in unavailing wishes to sink back into the quiet of non-existence—surely the vision would not have suggested the motions of infinite mercy. In vain do we look for such pictures in the word of God.

In relation to the design of punishment, the Scriptures employ even more expressive and affecting descriptions than those already adduced. Wisdom says, in her instructions to the erring children of men, "My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord; neither be weary of his correction: for whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."[g] And St. Paul says to the Hebrews, (xii. 5, 6,) "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." In the light of this principle, the prophet Jeremiah, bewailing the most direful calamities of his apostate and cast-off people, submissively ex-

[e] Ps. xcvi. [f] Ps. lxii. 12. [g] Prov. iii. 11, 12.

claims, "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins? Let us search and try our ways, and turn again to the Lord."[b] [*Surely the assertion, which is often heard from certain quarters, that this life is not a state of retribution, is as false as the Bible is true.*] Here also, as throughout the Bible, the truth shines out in cloudless noonlight, that while the law subjects transgressors to adequate punishment, it administers its penalties upon such a principle, that no man on earth has occasion to complain of it. For it is designed to humble and correct the sufferers.

With regard to the nature or consistence of punishment, it is represented in the Scriptures as consisting of those evils, in kind and degree, which legitimately appertain to the kind and degree of sins. It involves the deprivation of those blessings which are abused, and the suffering of those positive evils which are connected with the positive wrongs. If a person neglects the cultivation of his mind, his life is barren of the amiable graces and rich enjoyments of good mental culture. If he abuses the social and domestic relations, those relations become so many sores and annoyances to him, as they should be sources of pleasure. If he violates any of the laws of his nature, those laws, respectively, will take their appropriate vengeance upon him. And these appropriate evils are urged upon human consideration, by the inspired teachers, as the proper and every-day motives, so far as the fear of evil is designed to furnish motives, for restraint, self-government, and virtuous living.

The wise man, for instance, in dissuading men from the violation of the law of *temperance*, expostulates

[b] Lam. iii. 39, 40.

thus: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his color in the cup, when it moveth itself aright. At last it biteth like a serpent and stingeth like an adder."[i] And in relation to the transgression of the law of personal chastity, besides those burning plagues which must constantly consume the heart, he gives a startling picture of the dreadful physical result if seasonable repentance is not induced—"And thou mourn at the last, when thy flesh and thy body are consumed."[j]

This legitimate mode of punishment, as a general rule, is very comprehensively expressed by the inspired penman, thus: "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee."[k] "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins."[l] "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father; neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son; the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him. But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. * * In his righteousness that he hath done he shall live. But when the righteous turneth away from his righteousness and committeth iniquity, * * in his trespass that

[i] Prov. xxiii. 29—32.
[j] Prov. v. 11.
[k] Jer. ii. 19.
[l] Prov. v. 22.

he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he die."[m]

How clearly is the sentiment here expressed, that if men transgress the law, its penalty is unavoidable, and is comprised in the evils in which the transgressions involve them. The death here spoken of as the wages of sin, is not an extraneous punishment to be inflicted in another world in revenge for sins in this. It is a deprivation of good, suffered *in* sin. "*In* his sin that he hath sinned, he shall die." Yes, and such is this death, that he who has been wicked a part of his life shall have suffered it *in his sin*,—and being reformed, shall be free from it;—for "*in* his righteousness that he doeth he shall *live*."

The New Testament writers explain this penal death in sin, with much precision. "What fruit *had* ye in those things whereof ye are now ashamed? for the end (i. e. the fruit which they *had* received) of these things is death."[n] "For to be carnally minded is death. * * If ye live after the flesh ye shall die."[o] "Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, in the lusts of the flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others."[p] "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and in sins."[q] "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."[r] And this is the description of the penalty revealed to our first progenitors. "In the day thou eatest thereof, (or sinnest,) thou shalt surely die."[s]

Jesus Christ, the religious teacher's model of moral

[m] Ezek. xviii. 20—22. [n] Rom. vi. 21. [o] Rom. viii. 6, 13.
[p] Eph. ii. 3. [q] Eph. ii. 1. [r] 1 John iii. 14. [s] Gen. ii. 17.

faithfulness, was likewise in the familiar habit of warning mankind against the manner of sins which he saw them inclined to, by consideration of those penalties in particular, to which their darling sins exposed them. When he healed the impotent man, who it seems had brought disease upon himself by his own misdeeds, he kindly said unto him, "Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee."[t] The idea is, that if he should return to his evil practices, his troubles too would return upon him, even with increased severity. But when he addressed the self-righteous Scribes and Pharisees, whose leading sins were irreverence, selfishness, pride, turbulence and oppression, he grasped and laid before them the sufferings which he saw impending over *their* manner of moral corruptness. At one time some of them came and told him of the Galileans whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus answering said unto them, "Suppose ye that these Galileans were sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, nay: but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. Or those eighteen upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye that they were sinners above all men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you, nay: but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish."[u]

Now it is the practice of some religious teachers to take this particular language of Jesus, which he applied to a particular people on a special occasion, with reference to a peculiar exposure of theirs, and apply it indiscriminately to all. "Ye shall all *likewise* perish." Perish how? and *like* whom? Like those upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices. How miserably

[t] John vi. 14. [u] Luke xii. 1—5.

qualified then to "rightly divide the word of truth," are those who stand up and harangue the virtuous and pure, whom the preacher would hardly accuse of a fault, except, perhaps, in respect to their form of faith, and menace them with the saying, "Except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish." What reason would they give for threatening their friends, for some ordinary errors, with destruction like that inflicted upon the Galileans, when Pilate slew them around the altar upon which they were laying their offerings? None, surely, but that they knew not whereof they affirmed. But with regard to the people to whom Jesus applied this warning, thousands and thousands of them did perish by the fall of towers and walls, and by fire and sword, when they had come up to the great religious sacrifice in Jerusalem. And they perished in their national capacity under these calamities. Accordingly they did perish *likewise* as did those upon whom the tower of Siloam fell, and whose blood Pilate mingled with their sacrifices. And Jesus, knowing their real exposure, gave them just and appropriate warning in the words we have quoted. What a beauty and force there would be in the moral teachings and warnings of the pulpit, if the teachers would all learn wisdom from the Scriptures.

For another instructive specimen of the inspired teachings of legal penalties, I will refer the reader to St. Paul. In urging upon his brethren the most impressive warnings against the vices to which they were most likely to be tempted, he arrays before them a catalogue of striking examples. "But with many of them (the ancient Hebrews) God was not well pleased; for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples, to the

intent we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted. Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them. * * Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the destroyer,"—i. e. the plague. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world (*aionon, ages*) are come "[v]

When we witness these earnest and appropriate Scripture teachings, in relation to the real evils of sin, the legitimate penalties of God's law, we deplore the defection of the middle and modern ages. We see a host of teachers, grave and gay, who have lost sight of all these sober realities, and are diverting the minds of the people with off-hand declamation of fabulous terrors. "To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."[w]

Some of the punishments enumerated in cases which we have noticed, were inflicted more immediately by the hand of God than punishments usually are; but these were cases where the people had sinned against Divine requirements more specially revealed to them,—and they were designed also to demonstrate that judgment is of the Lord, and we are amenable to him; that "though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished."

The reader has now been led into a view of the Scripture teachings on the subject sufficiently exten-

[v] 1 Cor. x. 5—11. [w] Isa. viii. 20.

sive to settle the question as to the nature and design of punishment denounced by the law, and its harmony with the spirit and purpose of the law itself. Yet some may urge that there are terms employed to express the punishment of sin, and others to qualify it, which contradict this philosophical and Bible view of it, and prove it to be endless. Let there be no haste here. He who would make a qualifying word prove the endlessness of punishment, may make it prove none at all; for he may thus destroy the Bible testimony. We have seen what the Scriptures prove of the perfections of the Creator, and of the wise and good design of his laws to his children, and of the accordant spirit and purpose of the annexed penalties. Thus much is established, not by a doubtful criticism of a word, but by the plain every-day descriptions of these things themselves, in their nature, and their relations to one another. And now it must be a rash hand which would essay, by a doubtful word, to break up the entire concurrent force of the Divine nature and the primary and common teachings of the revealed Word.

To illustrate, I will present a brief summary from the book of the law, of its severest penalties. It is a sort of judicial summary made out by the Lawgiver himself, declaring that, if any man, or woman, or family, or tribe of Israel, should forsake the Lord God of their fathers, "The Lord shall separate him unto evil out of all the tribes of Israel, according to all the curses of the covenant that are written in this book of the law. So that the generation to come of your children, that shall rise up after you, and the strangers that shall come from a far land, shall say, when they see the plagues of that land, and the sicknesses which the Lord hath laid upon it, * * * * even all nations

shall say, Wherefore hath the Lord done thus unto this land? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Then men shall say, Because they have forsaken the covenant of the Lord God of their fathers, * * * * and the anger of the Lord was kindled against this land, to bring upon it all the curses that are written in this book." [x]

Here we have the direct and explicit declaration of the book of the law itself, that such is the amount of *all* the curses, all the punishments, written in it, that their full execution should be witnessed by him who should behold the miseries of the transgressors in the land of their habitation. The meaning in this case is express, explanatory, and unmistakable. He, therefore, who undertakes to prove from some qualifying term elsewhere applied to punishment, that the proper curse or penalty of the revealed law is endless suffering in the future world, virtually undertakes to prove that the testimony just quoted from the law is false. It cannot be pretended that by such an effort he only charges me with misconstruing the law. There is no construction of mine in the case. The passage quoted cannot be explained; for it stands itself an explanation of the legal penalties. It distinctly avers that in pouring upon the people those plagues and sicknesses which should desolate their land, the Lord would bring upon them *all the curses written in the book of the law.*

## SECTION II.

### *Controverted Terms, Designating and Qualifying Punishment.*

And now what are the terms, designating and qualifying punishment in other cases, which indicate any

[x] Deut. xxix. 18—28.

new system of Divine retribution, or change the present light of the subject? It will be answered that the descriptive term referred to is *hell*, and the qualifying term is *everlasting* or *eternal*. To these, then, we will attend, briefly, and with care.

1. The word *hell*. This is in the original Hebrew, *sheol*, and has its meaning well expressed in the Septuagint, by the Greek *hades*. This latter word is defined by the lexicons to signify literally *unseen, dark, covered, hidden*. And it is accordingly applied to the state of the dead, as denoting it to be an unseen state. To this word, in its literal meaning, the English, or rather Saxon word, *hell*, exactly corresponded in its former usage. Dr. Parkhurst says, that in some of the eastern, and especially in the western counties in England, the word is used in that primitive sense now. "To *hele* over a thing is to cover it."[y] Hence it is seen that this word literally expresses nothing in opposition to the teachings of the law, before considered, in relation to its penalties. The use of the word hell for punishment, would most literally indicate a state of darkness, or at most the destruction of life.

We grant, however, that a word may be used in some other than its primary and literal meaning. It may be used figuratively. But you must be careful how you force a *figurative* construction upon a word, which shall make it contradict the most positive and literal doctrines of the Bible. Figurative passages cannot be taken for new revelations, but only for embellishments and illustrations of known truth. Consequently, we must construe a figurative passage in relation to a given subject, in accordance with the

[y] Parkhurst's Gr. and Eng. Lex. on *hades*. See also, to the same purport, Dr. A. Clark's Commentary, on Matt. xi. 23.

general scope of the Divine testimony on that subject, taking into consideration the immediate occasion on which it is spoken or written, and following out the figure in its most natural bearing upon the subject.

And now, that the bearing of this term upon the penalties of the law may be fully understood, I will present the reader with all the cases of its occurrence in the books of the law, or the five books of Moses. The first instance of the use of this word in the Bible, is in Jacob's lamentation for the loss of his son Joseph. "I will go down into the grave, (*hades,*) unto my son mourning." The same was repeated by Judah, in his eloquent plea for Benjamin before Joseph in Egypt.[a] None will say that the word is used here for a state of endless misery,—for surely Jacob did not expect to go into such a state, and to find his beloved Joseph there. Neither did he mean by it any particular grave or sepulchre; for he did not suppose that Joseph was buried in a grave, believing that he was devoured of an evil beast. He meant by it the unseen state of death.

The only other case of the use of this word in the Pentateuch, is in Deut. xxxii. 22. "For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and it shall burn to the lowest *hell*, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains." It reads on as follows:—"I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them. They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction. * * The sword without and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and maiden," &c. This, therefore, is the revelation of no new description of penalty, but a warning given

[a] Gen. xxxvii. 35; xlii. 38; xliv. 29, 31.

to the people, on account of idolatry, of their exposure to just such calamities as we have before seen were denounced upon apostates in the book of the law. By the *lowest hell* in this case, is obviously meant the darkest and deepest hiding places of the earth. The threatened calamities should reach them, though they might hide in the deepest caverns, and dig into the bottoms of the mountains. "A fire is kindled in mine anger, and it shall burn to the lowest *hades*, and shall consume the earth with her increase, *and shall set on fire the foundations of the mountains.*"

A similar description of an unescapable calamity is given by the prophet Amos, (ix. 2.) "Though they dig into hell, thence shall mine hand take them." No one will suppose that the people would think of digging into a place of endless, unmitigated torment, to escape danger, nor that the Lord would take them out of such a place to punish them. The word *hades* is used in this place, as in that last quoted from Moses, according to its literal meaning, for a dark secret hiding place. "Though they dig into *hades*, thence shall my hand take them; though they climb up to heaven, thence will I bring them down. And though they hide themselves in the top of Carmel, I will search and take them out thence; and though they be hid from my sight in the bottom of the sea, thence will I command the serpent, and he shall bite them." Thus does the connexion render it plain that a temporal judgment is the subject of this prophecy, and that the strong language employed is poetically descriptive of its unavoidable prevalence.

I have gone out of the Pentateuch for this quotation, barely for an illustration. The reader has now placed before him all the instances of the use of the

word *hades*, or hell, in all the books of the law. And none can fail to see that its use neither teaches nor intimates any sentiment in the least at variance with the general teachings of the law in relation to its penalties.

☞ *Then no different doctrine on the subject of punishment will be found in the Old Testament.* ☜ To this position I call the attention of the Christian world. The Pentateuch contains the entire legal covenant, the revelation of the moral law and the institution of the ceremonial, with the appropriate penalties. The entire system of God's revelation to his earthly children is comprised in two parts, the *law* and the *gospel*. "The *law* was given by Moses, but *grace and truth* came by Jesus Christ."* And the historical and prophetic books of the Old Testament contain no new legal covenant, no new principles of law, or of judgment. The prophets were teachers and watchmen unto the house of Israel, to teach them out of the law, and to warn them, according to the word of the Lord, of any impending judgments. But the judgments of which the prophets gave warning, were those which should be founded upon the principles of the revealed law, according to the curses written in that book. I, therefore, call upon all Christians to reflect, that as they will not pretend that endless punishment is a penalty revealed in the law of Moses, they cannot find it in any of the prophetic narratives or warnings of judgment in the administration of the law. And if they force an unnecessary meaning upon a disputed word to make out an *illegal penalty*, they do violence to the Scriptures, and to the honor of God.

*In what covenant, then, shall we find the penalty of*

* John i. 17.

*endless torment?* The only other covenant is the *gospel;* but this is the covenant of grace. It does not open unheard-of stores of wrath and vengeance for feeble mortals, but it reveals a stupendous moral system of divine operation, by which even to save mankind from sin itself, that they may thus be saved from the condemnation of the law. Accordingly, the word of God, setting forth the terms of the second covenant, says, "But now hath he (Christ) obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. * * For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their minds, and write them in their hearts. * * All shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more."[b] So, while the law commands men to be holy, and denounces punishment upon disobedience, the gospel undertakes, by the merciful influences of truth and grace, to inspire men with the love of holiness, thus to fulfil the law in their hearts. Hence, in the reception of this covenant an apostle says, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."[c] And again; "For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more; * * * But ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem."[d]

[b] Heb. viii. 6—12. [c] 2 Tim. i. 7. [d] Heb. xii. 18—22.

In these cases, and in all cases of contrast between the two covenants, the second is described as having less of the ingredient of fear in it than the first. Therefore nothing can be more safely and confidently concluded, than that, while the first, or legal covenant, includes no penalty of endless punishment, the second or gospel covenant has no such penalty, of course. The legal covenant was designed in a particular manner to influence human conduct by the consideration of rewards and punishments. The gospel covenant, though it does not abrogate the doctrine of rewards and punishments, does specially, in as far as it differs from the former, provide other and higher influences. He, therefore, who will undertake, by the criticism of a *word*, to palm upon the covenant of grace the penalty of endless, revengeful torments for earthly sins, attempts a work which he has but illy considered. He must show, from the radical meaning and Scriptural use of the disputed word, and from the occasion of its occurrence in a given case, that it so necessarily bears his assumed sense, as to demand our sanction of it, even to the nullification of the uniform gospel description of the better covenant.

But so far as the word *hell* is concerned in the case, it has been shown that it can answer no such ruinous purpose. In the book of the law it has no such meaning; nor in the prophets, for they do but teach and warn upon the principles of the law. And surely the same word which, when rarely it is made descriptive of a state of punishment in the law and the prophets, refers only to temporal punishment, cannot, with the requisite demonstration, denote the infliction of infinite sufferings under the dispensation of grace.

So obvious is this fact, that the learned and orthodox

Dr. Campbell, whose religious prepossessions would naturally urge him to press into the support of endless punishment all the Scripture words and phrases he honestly could, was constrained by the unclouded light of this subject to put forth the following decisive language:—

"As to the word *hades*, which occurs in eleven places in the New Testament, and is rendered *hell* in all, except one, where it is translated *grave*, it is quite common in classical authors, and frequently used by the Seventy in the translation of the Old Testament. In my judgment it ought never in Scripture to be rendered *hell*, at least in the sense wherein that word is now universally understood by Christians. * * * It was written anciently, as we learn from the poets, (*for* what is called the poetic is nothing but the ancient dialect,) *aides*, and signifies obscure, hidden, miserable. To this the word *hell*, in its primitive signification, perfectly corresponded. For, at first, it denoted only what was secret or concealed. This word is found with little variation of form, and precisely in the same meaning, in all the Teutonic dialects."*

After extending his classical illustrations of the meaning of the word, the doctor repeats,—"But it is very plain that neither in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, nor in the New, does the word *hades* convey the meaning which the present English word, hell, in the Christian usage, always conveys to our minds." And speaking for biblical critics of his acquaintance generally, he adds,—"It were endless to illustrate this remark, by an enumeration and examination of all the passages in both Testaments wherein the word is found. The attempt would be unneces-

* Sixth Pre. Dissertation, p. 131.

sary, as it is hardly now pretended by any critic, that this is the acceptation of the term in the Old Testament."

I do not quote Dr. Campbell as authority in matters of religious faith;—but the fact that learned critics like him, whose prepossessions look for the doctrine of endless punishment in the Bible, are forced, against their wishes, by their criticisms on the literal meaning of the word *hades*, and its Scriptural usage, to relinquish all claim of support to such doctrine from that term, is a circumstance weighing something in confirmation of the view to which we are brought by a *de novo* examination of the subject.

II. But the word *hell* is sometimes rendered from another original term in the Scriptures, viz., *gehenna*. Let it be distinctly observed, however, that it does not stand as the representative of that word in the books of the law, nor in the Old Testament. And as there is no such penalty revealed in the law as endless punishment, but on the contrary the law expressly sums up all its penalties in temporal sufferings, we should not, by *a priori* reasoning, expect to find *Gehenna* introduced into other parts of the Bible as descriptive of any other than temporal punishments. Nevertheless I will not avail myself, with the reader, of this reasonable assumption, without submitting the subject of it to a philological and Scriptural scrutiny. What, then, is the radical meaning, and what the scriptural use, of the word *Gehenna?*

*Gehenna* is compounded of two Hebrew words, *gee*, land, or valley, and *Hinnom*, the name of the person who was the owner of the particular valley unto which this compound word was applied. This *valley of Hinnom* lay near Jerusalem, on the western border of the

lat of the tribe of Judah. It became at length noted as a place of resort for the idolatrous Jews, where they burned their children alive in the fire, a sacrifice to Moloch. But King Josiah in his reign prevented resort to this place for a while, by rendering it insupportably odious with garbage and filth from the city; as in 2 Kings xxiii. 10: "And he defiled Tophet, which is in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Moloch." *Tophet* was the place of the fire-stove in this valley.

From this time it seems that *gee Hinnom*, the valley of Hinnom, continued for a long period to be a common receptacle of garbage and filth from Jerusalem. A fire was kept continually burning to consume the garbage brought out there, and the worms were constantly preying on that part of the filth, which, in its abundance, lay about unconsumed. In this fire, also, some writers tell us, *criminals*, condemned to the most shameful and distressing punishment, were put to death. Such is the literal history of *Gehenna*, the valley of Hinnom.

But the prophets, who sought for the most striking figures by which to impress on the minds of the people the important subjects of their prophecies, used this valley as an emblem or comparison, by which to represent the wretched condition in which a continuance in vice would involve the Jewish nation. They not only forewarned the people that they should bury in Tophet until there should be no place, and their bodies should lie unburied, food for the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air, but also that their great city should be like unto Tophet; as in Jer. xix. 12; "Thus will I do unto this place, saith the Lord, and

to the inhabitants thereof, and even make this city as Tophet."

Thus far all are agreed. All agree that *Gehenna* is literally the name of the valley which has just been described; and that in the Old Testament this valley is never employed as an emblem of any other punishment than that temporal destruction which should come on the Jewish nation. How, then, shall it be made to appear that this word signifies a state of future misery, when it is used in the New Testament? It is used by our Lord as a word which the people understood, or had the means of understanding; for he used it in every case without explanation. And how could they know its meaning? They, in address to whom the Saviour used this word, could understand his meaning, because they were acquainted with the valley of which this word was the proper name, and with its use in the writings of their prophets, as an emblem of temporal calamity, and probably with its use as a place for the execution of capital punishments. But how could they understand him as meaning by it a place of punishment in the future world? As he did not inform them that he employed the word in any new sense, they must have understood it, when employed by him, according to its former usage.

But here some tell us that the Jews in their intercourse with the heathen, between the last of the prophets and the coming of Christ, had adopted into their religious creed the heathen fables of a Tartarus, or prison of fire below the earth, and that to this Tartarus they had applied *Gehenna*, the name of their odious valley. And they conclude hence that when Jesus used this word, he used it in its new sense,

meaning by it that world of torment which was originated in the said fables of the heathen, then lately borrowed by the Jews.

But we have not so learned Christ. When a speaker uses a word without explanation, he is to be understood as using it in the sense of such other authors as he is known to recognize as authority. Now unto what did Jesus refer the people as authority? What was he engaged in expounding, and enforcing on the people? The corrupt fables of the heathen, borrowed by the apostatized Jews? No; the Scriptures of the Old Testament. The law and the prophets were the authority recognized by Jesus Christ. Therefore, when he used Scripture words, without explaining them, he must have been understood by his disciples as using them in the *Scripture sense*, however such words may have been applied, by apostates, to other things.

But the last named assumption, concerning the Jewish usage of *Gehenna* in our Saviour's time, is unfounded. It does not appear that the Jews, as early as our Saviour's time, had ever used the word *Gehenna* in application to a place or state of future punishment. Some learned commentators have asserted that *Gehenna* was used for future punishment in the original of the Apocrypha; but Mr. Balfour has detected their error, having ascertained that the word *Gehenna* does not once occur in the original writings of the Apocrypha. And though his book, announcing this fact, has been before the public more than twenty years, and some of his most learned opposers have undertaken to controvert some parts of it, no one has contradicted his statement of the *absence* of the word Gehenna from the Apocrypha. There can be no dis-

pute about it, for the original of those books speaks for itself; and they who have asserted that *Gehenna* is there used for future punishment, must have got their minds wrought into the idea without a personal examination. And their assertion was then the more safe, there being but one party on the question. If there had been any controversialist to call on them for the authority upon which they made their statement, they would have gone to those writings and examined for themselves, in order to refer their opponent to book, chapter and verse, and would hereby have discovered their error.

And now with regard to other Jewish writings, to which reference may be made for the settlement of the question concerning the Jewish usage of *Gehenna* in our Saviour's time,—Rev. H. Ballou, 2d, D. D., who is extensively read in ancient Ecclesiastical History, has, with much and critical labor, examined all the authorities which can probably ever be brought to bear on this question, and has ascertained the fact that all other Jewish writings now extant, are as free from the use of *Gehenna*, in reference to future punishment, as are the books of the Apocrypha, until more than two hundred years after Christ. No Jewish writing extant, of a later date than the Old Testament Scriptures, uses this word, until the Targum of Jonathan Ben Uzziel; and this, the best of critics agree, could not have been written earlier than the end of the 2d century; some say the 4th, and some refer the work to as late a period as the 7th or 8th century.[1]

It seems now to be a settled point, that the last position from which disputants have argued for the application of *Gehenna* in the New Testament to future punish-

[1] See Universalist Expositor for May, 1832.

ment, is without evidence to support it. There is no evidence on which reliance can be placed, that even the apostatized Jews, in our Saviour's time, had ever applied the word *Gehenna* to future punishment. We are therefore left to make up our judgment on the meaning of the word in the New Testament, altogether from the Old Testament use of the phrase *Gee Hinnom*, and from the connexions in the several cases in which the New Testament employs it.

The literal sense and Old Testament usage have been considered and determined; and thus far all are agreed. Since, then, it is incontrovertibly settled, that *Gee Hinnom* in the Old Testament is only used as the proper name of the odious valley, and as an emblem of the then future corruptness and desolation of the Jewish city and nation; and since, furthermore, no Jewish writer had used the compound word, *Gehenna*, in any other sense,—by what authority can it be asserted, that this word, in the New Testament, is used for a place or state of endless punishment? The reader will perceive that, if there is any authority for such an assumption, it must be found in some very obvious assignment to it of the new and unheard of sense, by the great Teacher, in connection with his use of it. Does he assign to it any such new signification, either directly, or by implication? To answer this inquiry, we will briefly examine its New Testament usage.

Its first occurrence in this portion of the inspired Book, is in Matt. v. 21, 22: "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not kill: and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger

of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, (shallow brains,) shall be in danger of the council; but whosoever shall say, thou fool, (*Moreh, apostate,*) shall be in danger of *hell fire,*" (*Gehenna fire.*) Let it be borne in mind that this is the first instance of the use of the word Gehenna in the New Testament; and where is the evidence that it is here used in our opposers' new sense? No such evidence appears. We find nothing introduced here but the same *Gehenna fire* of which we read in the Old Testament, and which appears to have been used for the infliction of the highest punishments. Jesus here speaks in reference to three grades of *punishment; strangling*, by the judgment of twenty-three members; *stoning*, by the council of seventy-two; and being burnt in the valley of Hinnom. He used language which was so familiar to the people he addressed, that it would have been puerile for him to explain it. It seems to have been his design to guard his disciples against any dangerous mistake, with regard to the means by which they might expose themselves to the judgment of the civil tribunals of the country, to be cut off from their good work in form of law, and not as persecution for opinion's sake. They were of like passion with other men; they were punishable for injurious words as well as for injurious actions; and their enemies were watching them for evil. Being of a class of community not probably practised in judicial tactics, if they were not cautioned and guarded in relation to these things, they might unawares give occasion to their arch and ever watchful enemies, to procure their death by legal process. They might, in a momentary burst of passion, excited by abusive opposition, cast at their opposers some opprobrious epithet, for which they

would be subject to arraignment, and death by strangling, or stoning, or burning in the fire of *Gehenna*, according to the nature of the epithet.

Dr. Adam Clarke, in his Commentary on this passage, says, "It is very probable that our Lord means no more here than this; if a man charge another with apostasy from the Jewish religion, or rebellion against God, and cannot prove his charge, then he is exposed to that punishment (*burning alive*) which the other must have suffered if the charge had been substantiated. There are three kinds of offences here, which exceed each other in their degrees of guilt. 1. *Anger* against a man, accompanied with some injurious act. 2. *Contempt*, expressed by the opprobrious epithet, *Raca*, or *shallow brains*. 3. *Hatred* and *mortal enmity*, expressed by the term *Moreh*, or *apostate*, where such apostasy could not be proved. Now, proportioned to these three offences, were three different degrees of punishment, each exceeding the other in severity, as the offences exceeded each other in their different degrees of guilt. 1. The *judgment*, the council of *twenty-three*, which could inflict the punishment of *strangling*. 2. The *Sanhedrin*, or great council, which could inflict the punishment of *stoning*. 3. The being burnt alive in the valley of the son of Hinnom. This appears to be the meaning of our Lord." *

* Professor Stuart, after showing the literal meaning of this word to be what we have stated, argues, what none will dispute, the frequent Scripture use of words in a secondary or figurative sense. He then refers to this first use of *Gehenna* in the New Testament, and says that it is "the only passage which seems to be even capable of the *literal* sense." But upon quoting the passage, he puts the inquiry, "Is all this *literal*, or spiritual?" And finally he comes to his conclusion in these words: "The Saviour could not here mean to say that the Jews would *literally* punish the various gradations of crime which he marks. We must suppose, then, that he means to designate the punishment which God, who could judge the heart, would inflict, and which must be *spiritual*."

*Gehenna* occurs twice again in the same chapter, (verses 29, 30:) "And if thy right eye offend thee,

Well, suppose it were so;—suppose the design of Jesus was to teach that the Lord, "who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, even to give unto every man according to his ways," will administer different degrees of *spiritual* sufferings, according to the different degrees of sinfulness in man. What then? Does it follow that reference was made to punishment in another world? *No such punishment is written in the book of the law*,—nor in the prophets, of course, who founded their threatenings upon legal principles. And now, is the mere fact that Jesus Christ speaks of a punishment which *God* will inflict, a proof that he means the infliction of "immortal pains?" When David says, "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, for thou renderest unto every man according to his work," he speaks of retributions administered, not by Jewish rulers, but by the government of God. Does it follow hence, that the Psalmist meant, that God will in *mercy* raise up his offending children from the deep sleep of death, to inflict upon them unending torments? Who would have supposed that the circumstance of a punishment being administered by Him who "judgeth in the earth," (Ps. lxii. 12,) is proof that it must be administered in a future world? Yet this is precisely the argument of the learned Professor. After remarking that Jesus "could not mean to say that the *Jews* would *literally* punish the various gradations of crimes which he marks," and that "we must suppose, then, that he means to designate the punishment which God, who can judge the heart, would inflict, and which must be *spiritual*," he concludes,—"What is meant must then be, that God would punish, *in a future world*, with different degrees of severity, which were signified or symbolized by the Septemviri, by the Sanhedrim, and by being burned in the valley of Hinnom."—(Exegetical Essays on *Gehenna*.)

To Professor Stuart belongs the credit of such an argument. But it will be seen that his argument just as much makes the words which stand for *Septemviri*, and *Sanhedrim*, mean a place of endless punishment "in a future world," as *Gehenna*. And this, then, is the first revelation, the original bursting forth, of the astounding dogma, that God will raise up millions of his children, and hold them up in unending being, that he may wreak upon them unending vengeance! It is not in the Law,—it is not in the Prophets,—it is not in the literal meaning of the terms *Septemviri*, *Sanhedrim*, and *Gehenna*, —nor is it in any explanation which the Saviour has given of these words,—but it is in these six words of Professor Stuart in relation to a figurative use of those terms, viz., "*What is meant must then be!*" And this, I apprehend, is as good authority as that dogma will in any case be found to be entitled to.

It is granted that the word *Gehenna* is in some cases used figuratively, "signifying or symbolizing" a punishment which *God* would inflict; but the reader who goes with me in the examination of its New Testament usage, will see that the assumption that the punishment it symbolizes, is "in a *future world*," *is not* only unauthorized by the testimony, but opposed to it.

pluck it out and cast it from thee; for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into *Gehenna.*" The other verse is the same, except substituting the *hand* for the *eye.* The same is recorded by the Evangelist Mark; thus: (Mark ix. 43:) "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off; it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, (*Gehenna,*) into the fire that never shall be quenched;" or, as the most literal translation is, *into the unquenchable fire;* "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." This word *Gehenna* is twice repeated in the same sense in the verses which follow.

Now it is evident that in this case the word *Gehenna* has no reference to a place of future torment, because Jesus was not discoursing on the subject of a future state. Such a thing is supposed as an entrance into the life here spoken of, *maimed;* and that on account of denying ourselves of what would cause offence against the gospel. Can this apply to the future state? Can you conceive of such a thing as a person's entering into life, in the resurrection immortal state,—entering into the blissful paradise of God, feeling there *maimed;* and that too, in consequence of having done so *well* in this world, as to cut off what would have caused offence? Such a thing is not supposable. But in this world, persons may, by faith and obedience, enter into the life of the gospel, and yet feel maimed on account of some sacrifices made. Here then is the entering into life maimed. It can only be in this world. And as the casting into *Gehenna* is set against the entering into life maimed, this too must be expressive of some calamity on earth

The plain sense of this passage is, that it was better for the disciples to suffer what privations an adherence to the gospel in that age required, and enjoy the gospel life, and the divine protection which was promised the true disciples, than to abandon Christ's cause, and be cast into *Gehenna*, or suffer in those dire calamities of the unbelieving Jewish nation, which should make their city like Tophet in *Gehenna*, and literally fill up that valley with the unburied carcasses of that people. The phrase, "unquenchable fire," and the saying, "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched," are allusions to the well known worm and fire of the valley of Hinnom, before spoken of.[h] But figuratively used, as they seem to be here, they denote the continuance and effectiveness of those evils, which should, like the worm and fire of *Gehenna*, prey upon and consume that people. These calamities were, by the prophets, even when the valley of Hinnom was not referred to, called a fire that should not be quenched; as in Jer. vii. 20:—"Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, mine anger and my fury shall be poured out upon this place, upon man, and upon beast, and upon the trees of the field, and upon the fruit of the ground, and it shall burn, and shall not be quenched." And Jer. xvii. 27: "Then will I kindle a fire in the gates thereof, and it shall devour the palaces of Jerusalem, and it shall not be quenched." Hence we perceive that this unquenchable fire was in the earth; we read nothing of

[h] On this phraseology Professor Stuart justly remarks, "It would seem that the custom of desecrating this place, (*Gehenna*,) thus happily begun, was continued in after ages down to the period when our Saviour was on earth. Perpetual fires were kept up, in order to consume the offal which was deposited there. And as the offal would breed worms, (for so all putrefying meat of course does,) hence came the expression, 'Where the worm *dieth not, and the fire is* not quenched.'"

it in the Scriptures when speaking of the resurrection world. It being called *unquenchable fire*, denotes that the judgment signified by it should not be checked, or prevented from accomplishing its full destined work.

The word *Gehenna* occurs again in Matt. xxiii. 33: "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" (the punishment of *Gehenna?*) The meaning here is obvious. Jesus was addressing those people whom the prophets had forewarned that they should be food for the beasts and fowls in the valley of Hinnom, and that their city should be as Tophet. He saw them in the practice of the very iniquities on which were predicated these threatenings of punishment, and yet they were placing reliance on their outside piety, as if that would shield them. The whole of the preceding part of this chapter he had devoted to an exposure and reprehension of their hypocrisy; and here he interrogates them as if he had said: "Ye brood of vipers, how can you expect, by such hypocrisy, to escape that punishment which your prophets have forewarned you shall crowd *Gehenna* with the unburied carcasses of this people, and even make your city as Tophet?" By *the punishment of Gehenna* we do not understand Jesus to mean merely what should be suffered in that particular valley, but that judgment, that great calamity, which should come on that whole people, and the effects of which on that nation the prophets represented by reference to the valley of Hinnom. That this is what Jesus here meant by the *punishment of Gehenna*, is furthermore certain from his own succeeding explanation of it. "Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes; and some of them ye shall kill and crucify, and some of them ye

shall scourge in your synagogues, and persecute them from city to city; that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth. Verily I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! Your house is left unto you desolate," &c. Now what respect can we have for all the assertions of men which are against the words of Jesus? For he, directly proceeding to describe the *punishment of Gehenna*, shows that he meant by it that calamity which should come on that generation of the Jews, and desolate their country and city.

Another instance of the use of the word under consideration, is in Matt. x. 28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him, which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (*Gehenna.*) The same is thus recorded in Luke xii. 4, 5. "And I say unto you, my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear; fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him."

This is the only case in which there seems to be the least plausible ground for an application of Gehenna to punishment in the future world. It speaks of the power of God to cast into Gehenna after he hath killed. But a just consideration of the case will, it is presumed, satisfy the reader, that the word is not here used as a revelation of any such new description of punishment. This passage was addressed by our Lord to his ministering disciples, as he was sending them out into the world to propagate his doctrines. It is not to be supposed that he meant to threaten them

with a future Gehenna of endless torments, when he had never warned the enemies of his cause with any other than a Gehenna of temporal calamities. His design was to guard them against being influenced by the fear of man to abandon his cause. Men could kill the body, but not the (*psuke*) soul. The word here rendered *soul* is most commonly used for *life*. And the circumstance that a distinction is here made, which is not made elsewhere, between killing the (*soma*) body and the (*psuke*) life, leads us to the conclusion that in this case something is meant by killing the body short of taking the life.

The word *apokteino*, here rendered *kill*, signifies, according to the lexicons, *to kill, to slay, to take away, to remove, to beat almost to death, to tease or plague*, &c. And as killing the body is here spoken of in distinction from killing the life, it appears to me evident that it denotes the *taking away* of the comforts and privileges of the body, the teasing or plaguing of the body, (a sense which the word rendered *kill* may express,) without taking the *life*. And of this scourging of the body, as Matthew shows us in his record of the same conversation, Jesus had just been informing his disciples that they should suffer. "Beware of men," said he, "for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; * * * * and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake; but he that endureth to the end shall be saved." That is, he who continued faithful should have his *life* preserved, though men might thus kill, that is, scourge and plague the body.—"Fear them not, therefore," continued Jesus, "for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed; and hid which shall not be known. What I tell you in darkness, that speak ye

in light; and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye on the house-tops. And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul [life] and body in Gehenna. Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore, for ye are of more value than many sparrows." That is, *fear not men;* for this is a repetition of what was said in the 26th verse. "Fear *them* not, therefore." Jesus was sending the disciples out to labor in the gospel ministry, and aimed to inspire them with a confidence in the Divine protection in the path of duty,—but with a fear to forsake duty for human protection. They might fear nothing in the path of duty; fear nothing but to offend the laws of God. It would be by such offence that they would subject themselves to the greatest evil. Though it would not consist with the Divine economy to work that constant miracle, which would prevent men's sometimes killing, or scourging their *bodies*,—if they were faithful, God would preserve their *lives*. But if they should abandon duty to procure the protection of men, the power of God, after it had afflicted their bodies, would cast them into *Gehenna*, or destroy both their lives and bodies by that judgment, which was called the punishment of *Gehenna*.

True, some of the disciples were to lose their lives for Christ's sake. But this should only be when they should see their work to be done, as did Paul when he said, "I am now ready to be offered,"—so that they should offer themselves a willing sacrifice to the cause of truth. Then it might be said in truth of them, as

Jesus said of himself, "No man taketh it (my life) from me, but I lay it down of myself."[1] The disciples were immortal, to the accomplishment of their mission, if they were faithful to duty.

Such, then, seems to be the sentiment of this portion of Scripture. Jesus designed to encourage his disciples to a fearless march in the way of duty, by the assurance that in that way God would preserve their lives, until he should make them to see, and cheerfully consent, that it was the best time for them to die;—and until that time, though men might kill or scourge their *bodies*, they could not take their lives. And if one is assured that, in faithfulness to duty, men cannot destroy his life until he is prepared in his mind to give himself a willing sacrifice for the cause he loves, then in the path of duty he has nothing to fear from men. But if, for fear of men, the disciples should apostatize from the Christian cause, they would fall under that judgment of God, which, after killing or torturing the body, would cast into *Gehenna*,—would destroy both life and body in that calamity which was called the punishment of *Gehenna*. I say they would fall under that judgment of God which *would* do this; for though the text only says that he hath *power* to do it, the testimony of the Scriptures in general on the same subject, as we have seen, shows that the judgment here referred to *would* be executed on the unbelieving Jews, and on the apostates from the Christian religion.

Our Saviour employs this word, (Matt. xxiii. 15,) as it might appropriately be employed, as an emblem of *odiousness*: "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one

[1] John x. 18.

proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him two-fold more the child of *Gehenna* than yourselves!" The proselytes were two-fold *worse*, or more *odious*, than those who made them. And there is a passage in James, where the destructive effect of the bad use of the tongue is represented by the *fire of Gehenna.* (See James iii. 6.) "And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity; and is set on fire of hell," (*Gehenna.*)

Thus endeth the catalogue of cases in which *Gehenna* occurs in the New Testament. And the candid reader will participate with me in the high satisfaction derived from the admirable harmony of the Scripture doctrines. So far as we have made progress in our investigations, we find no verbal description of punishment which contradicts the merciful design of the law, and the adaptedness of its penalties to promote its benevolent ends.

III. But there is one other word in the original of the New Testament, which is rendered *hell* in the common version, and which has been thought to mean a place of endless punishment. It is *Tartarus.* It occurs but once in the Bible, and that is in 2 Peter ii. 4. "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, (*Tartarosas,*) and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment."

As *Tartarus* is not found elsewhere in the New Testament, and it does not occur in the Septuagint, we must have recourse to the Greek classics for its meaning. From this source we learn that Tartarus was the heathen name of their fabulous prison in the bowels of the earth. Dr. Clarke quotes *Hesiod* as saying, "Here, (in Tartarus,) the rebellious *Titans* were bound in penal chains." And again,

"Black Tartarus, within earth's spacious womb."

The question now to be considered is, for what purpose did Peter introduce this word in the case before us? Did he mean to use it literally, for the heathen fabulous prison of fire in the bowels of the earth, with the design to give his sanction to those fables? No Christian will contend for this. It will be of no avail, then, to assume that he used it to "symbolize" the future hell of a portion of the modern Christian church; for no such "place of torment" is revealed or taught in the Scriptures, *to be* symbolized. The authors of the London Improved Version of the New Testament, suppose that he meant to symbolize the state of "judicial blindness," unto which God consigned the fallen or treacherous messengers,[1] "who were sent to spy out the land of Canaan, unto the judgment of a great day, i. e. when they were destroyed by a plague." For this view of the subject they refer to "Simpson's Essays," a work to which I have not had access. But these translators add, "Perhaps, however, the writer may refer to some fanciful account of the fall of angels contained in the apocryphal book which lay before him, without intending to vouch for that fact. He might introduce it merely to illustrate his argument."

That Peter here quoted from an apocryphal book, seems to have been the opinion of many critical commentators; and Jude is supposed to have quoted from the same author. This opinion commends itself to my mind as the most probable. The passage bears a strong resemblance to many passages in Greek fabu-

[1] "*Angelos*," says Parkhurst, quoting Austin, "is a name not of nature, but of office." The office of *messenger*, which the word *angel* means, is applied to either *spiritual or physical* agents, as the case may be.

ious descriptions of incidents in relation to Tartarus. Some fabulous work, not Greek, but Jewish, is evidently quoted by Jude, verse 9th. "Yet Michael, the archangel, when, contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee." Such quotations from fabulous and apocryphal works, and references to popular opinion, which are used for comparison and illustration, never involve the idea of a sanction of the stories or opinions referred to. This reference to the story of a dispute between Michael and the devil, where the writer's sense of propriety made the former guard against raillery, even toward the evil angel, was designed to set off the disgusting arrogance of those disorganizers he was reproving, who "despised dominion, and spake evil of dignities." Our Lord said to the Pharisees, "If I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges."[k] He did not mean to admit that the children of the Pharisees had the power to do those works which they pretended; but he argued with them upon their own assumed principles, to convict them of injustice towards him. He quoted also some fabulous story of the Jews, when, in the latter part of the same chapter, he introduced the case of the unclean spirit going out of a man, and returning with seven other spirits more wicked than himself, making the last state of that man worse than the first. The moral of the story, as applied to the Jews of that age, is all he aimed to inculcate,—viz., "So shall it be with this generation." It is as if he had said, "The state of this generation subsequent to the coming of their expected Messiah,

[k] Matt. xii. 27.

shall compare with that preceding, as the last state of the demoniac in your fable compares with the first." And with regard to the design of Peter in quoting from the fabulous work in relation to the durance of certain angels in Tartarus for judgment, the application he makes of it is, that "the Lord knoweth how to reserve the unjust unto a day of judgment to be punished." And as the day of judgment with those apostates of whom he was complaining, St. Peter says, "*Whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.*" He was not treating on a judgment to be postponed for ages.

It is now seen that the word Tartarus, as used in this single case in the Scriptures, proves nothing contrary to the general tenor of the inspired teachings on the legal penalties. But, in concluding my remarks on the subject before us, I will show that the popular use of this passage is utterly exploded by other parts of the same creed which adopts it. It is supposed that the Miltonian doctrine of the conversion of holy angels to devils, is taught in this place. Dr. Watts versifies the sentiment which the dominant sects hold of this delivering of the angels into chains of darkness, in the following stanza:—

> "There Satan, the first sinner, lies,
> And roars and bites his iron bands;
> In vain the rebel strives to rise,
> Crushed with the weight of both thy hands."[1]

They at the same time maintain that these fallen angels, or devils, are freely and actively ranging over the face of this our world, scheming and working mightily and successfully against the designs and operations of God and his Christ, achieving and maintaining almost uni-

[1] Watts, H. 44, B. 2.

versal empire in the great family of God's children. Such brilliant achievements against the government of the Eternal, acquired and maintained in the world *above ground*, by the imprisoned angels chained down in *Tartarus*, are incredible. The idea refutes itself. And we turn from these fables to the beautiful and harmonious teachings of the Divine Spirit.

As we have had our attention called to the heathen *Tartarus*, and to the occasional employment by the sacred writers of popular opinions, to enforce truth and duty, I deem this the proper place for the introduction of the parable of Dives and Lazarus, (Luke xvi. 19—31.) It may be urged by some that this parable presents an objection to the view taken, in the beginning of this section, on the word *hades*, for here it is represented as a place of torment after death. The rich man is represented as being dead and buried, and yet *lifting up his eyes in hades, being in torment.*

The objection here presented being at first view plausible, notwithstanding we have shown by the literal meaning of the word, and its use in the law, and by the testimony of Dr. Campbell, who has the general concurrence of learned critics, that the use of this word cannot be relied upon as proof of punishments contrary to the words of the law, yet I will give place to a brief consideration of this parable.

With regard to the *parabolic* character of this passage, though occasionally a person of more party zeal than knowledge insists on taking it as a literal narrative, there is rarely an intelligent commentator who will adopt a position so untenable. *Lightfoot*, after ridiculing the idea that "this is not a parable, but a true story," proceeds to say: "And that it was

a parable, not only the consent of all expositors may assure us, but the thing itself speaks it."[m]

As it respects the *elements* of a parable, it may be composed of natural incidents, literal facts, or fictitious narratives, as may best suit the design. On this point Dr. Barnes, an able Presbyterian commentator, speaks with great clearness and truth, as follows: A parable "is a narrative of some fictitious or real event, in order to illustrate more clearly some truth that the speaker wishes to communicate. It is not necessary to suppose that the narratives were strictly true. The main thing,—the inculcation of spiritual truth,—was gained equally, whether it was true, or was only a supposed case. Nor was there any dishonesty in this. It was well understood. No person was deceived. The speaker was not understood to affirm the thing literally narrated, but only to fix the attention more firmly on the moral truth that he presented."[n]

The remark of some, that the story of the Rich Man and Lazarus is not a parable, because the Saviour says, "*There was a certain rich man,*" is too puerile to be entitled to a labored notice. So parables are usually introduced, not by a supposition, but in plain narrative form. So the other parable in the same chapter begins,—"There was a certain rich man which had a steward." And even the parable of Jotham is introduced with the saying, "The trees went forth on a time to anoint a king over them."[o] But enough of this.

And what are the elements of the story which Jesus employed in this parable? They are the heathen fabulous descriptions of the under world, which had been

[m] See Paige's Selections, Sec. xlix. [n] Barnes' Notes, on Matt. xii. 3—9.
[o] Judges ix. 8.

partially adopted by the Jews. To the entire subterranean world they gave the name *hades*. This they divided into two departments, Elysium, the blest abode, and Tartarus, the prison of fire,—between which there was a deep gulf or chasm. It is, indeed, generally conceded, that the story employed in this parable is founded on Judaized heathen views of *hades*. Then let the sectarian make the most of it possible, even taking it as a literal narrative, and he cannot make it favor the doctrine of misery in the final immortal state, beyond the resurrection. For admitting the *hades* of the New Testament, unlike that of the Old, to be as the poetic fables, and this story too, if taken for literal truth, would represent the state of the deceased, to be full of active life, and of enjoyment in one department, and of suffering in the other, yet the New Testament restricts us in its application to *the intermediate state*. In the event of the resurrection hades shall be destroyed, and the triumphant exclamation shall be raised in a shout of ecstasy, "*O hades! where is thy victory?*" This is an interrogatory assertion, that in the consummation promised, not a single victim shall hades boast.

Our opposers have sometimes tauntingly said to us, "There is an account of a rich man in hell; how will you get him out?" To which I would answer; There is an account that this same hell, or *hades*, shall be destroyed, so that no victim shall be held in it. And when all men are raised up from it, and hades itself is destroyed, how will you get men back into hades again?

But I do not admit that this parable was designed to teach the doctrine of torment even in the intermediate state. Where did the Jews get their notions *concerning* hades, that it was divided into Elysium

and Tartarus, a place of happiness and of misery? Not from their Scriptures; for, as it is conceded by our most learned doctrinal opposers, the Old Testament Scriptures teach no such thing. They took this view from the corrupt fables of the heathen, in their intercourse with them after the age of the prophets, and previous to the coming of Christ. And that Jesus laid the scene of this story in those heathen fables, is evident, in that he makes the parable to represent the places of the rich man and Lazarus as being on a level, on the opposite sides of a great gulf or chasm, precisely like the heathen fabulous under world of Elysium and Tartarus. But the occasion on which the parable was spoken, shows that Jesus designed to represent by it the then approaching change of conditions with Jews and Gentiles in this world, when the former should be cast down and trodden under foot, and the latter be exalted. And the sequel shows, that though Jesus employed a story, which should call to the minds of the Jews those heathen fables which they had borrowed, he did it not to give his sanction to those fables, but to reprove and shame them for their adherence to them. For, in reference to the heathen habits of necromancy, or conversation with the dead, the parable makes the rich man to request that one should be sent from the dead to instruct the Jews, and save them from the evil unto which they were hastening. But the answer is, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." Let them hear Moses and the prophets about what? Surely not about *torment in hades*, for they never said a word about it. Moses assured the people, as we have seen, (Deut. xxix.,) that *all the curses written in the book of the law*, should be executed on transgressors, so as to be witnessed in

the land of their residence, in which they should practise their sinful abominations. Yes, Moses, and the *prophets* too, said much about those temporal calamities to which that nation would expose themselves by sin. And here Jesus makes his parable say of the Jews, "Let them hear Moses and the prophets." As if he had said; "Abandon your resort to heathen fables, concerning torments in the state of the dead, and go back to your own sacred Scriptures, to Moses and the prophets, and give heed to their instructions and warnings, concerning those real evils to which you are exposed, and which are even at your doors." An unfortunate parable is this for the doctrine of future torments. The story borrows its imagery from the fables of the heathen, for the purpose of being so applied as to convey to the Jews the more cutting reproof for having adopted those corrupt human forgeries, and with more striking emphasis to command them back to the Scriptures which they had neglected.

I have now devoted as much attention as my limits will admit, to the three terms which have been thought to designate a place of punishment in the immortal world. These terms are *Hades*, *Gehenna*, and *Tartarus*. *Sheol* we merge in *hades*, which the Septuagint employs as a translation of it. Every occurrence of *Gehenna* and *Tartarus* has been examined, and not the shadow of a doubt rests upon either case, as to its application, when applied to punishment, to sufferings in the present world. I have not adduced all the cases of the use of *hades*, because my limits would not admit it, and the labor were needless. It is not pretended by the learned believers in endless punishment, that this word is used in the Scriptures to describe it; and if it were so pretended, we have given so

full a definition of its meaning, and have gone so far in exposition of its Scripture use, as to evince that an attempt to raise the disputed doctrine from it must obviously be futile, and to enable the reader to explain every other case of its occurrence, by the connexions, repectively, in which it may be found.

IV. We come now to the qualifying terms, sometimes applied to punishment, expressive of *duration*. These are *forever*, *everlasting*, and *eternal*. In the Septuagint, and the Greek of the New Testament, they are *aion*, and its derivative, *aionios*.

Upon the meaning of these words, Professor Stuart, in his Exegetical Essays, assumes that the *proper* signification of *aion* and *aionios*, as used by the Greek writers of the Septuagint and New Testament, is *eternity* and *eternal*, and that when they are used in a limited sense, it is a *catachrestic*, or forced and unnatural usage. Yet he has presented no facts to support such an assumption. He has given us no authority for departing from the following definition of *aion*, by his learned orthodox brother, Dr. Parkhurst. "*Aion*, from *aei*, always, and *ōn*, being, *always being*. It denotes *duration*, or *continuance of time*, but with great variety." *This* he gives as the *proper* and *radical* meaning of the word, "*duration*, or *continuance of time*;" and then adds, "but with great variety." He then gives examples of different uses of the word, by reference to certain places of Scripture, of which places every reader of the Bible is to judge for himself.

But you will say that if aion is compounded of *aei*, always, and *ōn*, being, then the *radical* meaning of the word is *endless duration*, or *eternity*. Let us look then at the signification of the word *aei*, which is the component part of *aion* that applies to *duration*, and is

rendered *always*. "*Aei*, from *a*, intensive, and *eo*, to be." 1. *Always*, *ever*. Acts vii. 51,—"Ye do *always* resist the Holy Ghost; as your fathers did, so do ye." 2 Cor. vi. 10,—"As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing." These are the only cases which Parkhurst brings to support his *strongest* sense of the Greek *aei;* and in these, the reader perceives that the word means no more than *continual*. His second definition is, "*Always*, *ever*, in a *restrained sense*, i. e. at some stated times." And third, "*Very frequently*, *continually*." And to these definitions he quotes Mark xv. 8,—"And the multitude, crying aloud, began to desire him (Pilate) to do as he had *ever* done unto them." And 2 Cor. iv. 11,—"For we which live are *always* delivered unto death for Jesus' sake." And 2 Peter i. 12,—"Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you *always* in remembrance of these things." Such is the signification, and such the Scripture use, of the word *aei*, which with the word *ōn*, *being*, makes *aion*, the Greek term under consideration. It is plain therefore that the proper and radical meaning of this word is, as Parkhurst has defined it, simply *duration*, or *continuance of time; indefinite duration*. When, therefore, we undertake to *define* the duration expressed by it, we must do this by arguing from the nature of the subject to which it is applied. The same remarks will apply to the *adjective aionios*, which, as Professor Stuart remarks in his Essays, p. 39, corresponds in meaning with *aion*, the *substantive*.

Thus much I have thought proper to lay before the reader with regard to *aion* and *aionios*, to show that when one assumes that the *proper* signification of these words is *eternity* and *eternal*, he assumes a false position; that the *proper* signification of these words is

*duration indefinite;* and that consequently whoever asserts that either *aion* or *aionios* does in any given case apply to *endless* duration, is bound to support his assertion by argument from the connexion or the nature of the subject.

I admit, however, that a word may become gradually changed by use, until it comes to be commonly employed in a sense quite different from its radical meaning. If any assert that this was the case with *aion* in the time of the Greek writers of the Scriptures, that it had then come into use to signify, properly, or by its own force, *eternity* or *endless duration*, let the assertion be judged by the facts which appear in the Scripture use of this word. I have examined 351 cases of the use of *aion* and *aionios* in the Septuagint, which comprise nearly all the cases of their occurrence in the Old Testament. In those cases which I have examined, they are rendered by the English words *ever*, *forever*, *everlasting*, and *eternal*. In 220 of these cases the words are applied to the duration of times, things, and events, *in the earth*. This I think no man, on examining each case, would dispute. In the remaining 131 cases, the words are applied to God, his attributes, his praise, the kingdom of the Messiah, and of the saints, &c. Thus in *nearly two thirds* of the instances of the use of *aion* and *aionios* in the Greek of the Old Testament, they are used in application to limited duration of times and things on earth. Does this look like these words having come into use to signify, by their own force, *eternity* and *eternal*? Far from it. Their Scripture use is according to their radical meaning, *duration*, or *continuance of time*, the extent of which is to be determined in each case from the subject. And in many of the remaining 131 cases

of the use of *aion* and *aionios* in the Old Testament, it does not appear that the sacred writers in using them grasped the idea of *eternity*. When applied to the *praise of God*, and the *displays of his goodness*, though these will continue eternally, it does not appear that the sacred writers by the use of *aion* meant to express anything more than *continual*, *perpetual*, or *from age to age*. The phrase, *from generation to generation*, is sometimes used as a repetition of the same idea that had just been expressed by *aion*, *forever*. As in Lam. v. 19,—"Thou, O Lord, remainest *forever;* thy throne *from generation to generation*." Now we may as well argue that the phrase, *from generation to generation*, expresses by its own proper force eternal duration, because it is applied to the continuance of God's throne, as that *aion* expresses by its own proper force eternal duration, because it is applied to the continuance of God's existence. And with as much propriety might it be said that the proper signification of the adjective *great*, is *infinite*, because it is often applied to the Divine Being.

Because the word *aion* did not, with the Greek writers of the Scriptures, properly signify *eternity*, they would frequently *repeat* the word, when they would express great extent of duration, and sometimes in the plural number, and add in some cases the adverb *eti*, which signifies *yet*, *still*, or *farther*. As in Ex. xiv. 18,—"The Lord shall reign (*ton aiona*, *kai ep aiona*, *kai eti*) age upon age, or forever and ever, and farther." And Dan. xii. 3,—"They shall shine as the stars (*eis ton aiona*, *kai eti*) to the age, or forever, and farther." And Micah iv. 5,—"*We will walk in the name of the Lord our God*, (*eis ton aion*, *kai epekeina*,) *forever*, *and beyond it*." Now

to substitute the word *eternity* for *aion*, in such cases, reading *from eternity to eternity, and farther*, would make perfect nonsense.. The Scripture writers express the idea of *God's eternity*, by different methods, speaking of him as *self-existent, immortal, unchangeable*, of *whose years there shall be no end*, &c. And so is the endless continuance of the future state of human existence in purity and happiness expressed, by its immortality, incorruptibility, spirituality, heavenliness; (1 Cor. xv. 42—49;) by the saying that they *shall die no more*, (Luke xx. 36;) and shall be made alive in and with him who is made after the power of *akatalutos*, endless or indissoluble life, (Heb. vii. 16.) But it has been sufficiently shown that this idea of God's eternity, and the endless continuance of the future happy existence of men, is not expressed by the natural force of the words *aion* and *aionios*. The word *aionios* therefore, connected with the *punishment of the wicked, is not the least proof of its endless duration*. Neither in the *nature* and *design* of punishment, is there any thing from which you can argue its unlimited duration. Even the reverse is shown in the first section of this chapter. There are frequent mentions made in the Scriptures of cases in which God had then, already, judged and punished the wicked according to their doings, even *according to all their abominations*.[p] It is manifest, therefore, that the punishing of the wicked according to their doings is not an *endless*, an *unlimited* work; and the word *aionios cannot* make it so. But if one asserts that there *is* an unlimited punishment, and that any particular passage speaks of it, this must be made out, not from the word

[p] Ps. ix. 4; lxxvi. 8, 9. Isa. xl. 2. Ezek. vii. 8; xxxvi. 19.

*aionios*, but by showing that the given passage speaks of the *future* and *final condition of mankind.*

But this, judging from what has been, I think none will undertake. After all the concessions in relation to the literal meaning and various uses of the word, when the attempt is made to prove the eternity of punishment, the reliance is found to be placed upon the mere force of the word *aionios* (everlasting or eternal) itself. No effort is made, because there is no ground of success, to prove by arguments independent of the disputed *word*, that the subject of discourse in the given case is man's immortal and final state. But nothing can be more conclusively settled than is the position that the natural force of *aionios* cannot prove that to be endless, which is in its very nature limited.

With regard to the legal covenant by Moses, on whose penalties we have been treating, it in no case employs the word *aionios* in application to punishment, unless we may regard in this light a few cases like the following: (Ex. xxi. 5, 6:) "And if the servant (when entitled to freedom on the seventh year) shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children, I will not go out free; then his master shall bring him unto the judges, and his master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him *forever.*" This everlasting service may be deemed by some a punishment for the servant's refusal to accept his freedom, but it is not endless.

An examination of the principal cases of the use of *aionios* in relation to punishment, in other parts of the Bible, will most admirably confirm the view which we have now taken of both the radical and Scriptural meaning of the word before us. But this examination, and likewise additional instruction on the legal

penalties, will be embraced in the following chapter, on the subject of judgment.

In concluding this chapter, I will ask the reader to "hold fast" the important sentiment which it establishes, and bear it along with him as he investigates the different parts of the complete Compend of Divinity. We have found the penalties to harmonize in spirit and purpose with the purpose of the law, which God instituted in love for the good of his children,—adapted, not to thwart, but to promote the design of the Supreme Legislator, in subjecting his moral creatures to established rules of health and happiness. We have seen also that no Scripture word, descriptive of, or qualifying punishment, throws any shade of darkness over this beautiful light of the subject. Thus is Jehovah honored as LAW-GIVER;—and shall he not be equally honored as JUDGE? COME AND SEE.

# CHAPTER VI.

## JUDGMENT.

"For all his ways are judgment."[a]

No reasonable person can feel indifferent with regard to the judgment of that almighty Ruler, to whom we are all accountable, and whose government disposes of us. Perhaps no word has been more abused in its application, than has the word *judgment* in the Scriptures, in its popular use by modern theologians. Rather than being understood of those wise decisions of God, by which his government is in all things directed for the wholesome discipline and ultimate subjection of his moral universe, it has been applied to a supposed future grand assemblage of the human race, to hear at once an arbitrary sentence, pronouncing their final doom. So familiar has been this application of the word judgment in its theological use, that most persons, at the mere *sound* of the word, are carried in their thoughts to such an assemblage of all mankind, receiving their final sentence.

But we are persuaded that this view of the judgment of God does not redound to the praise of his glory. It does not represent him as the governor of mankind for their good. We are satisfied that by a careful attention to the Scriptures, we shall find this subject presented in a more pleasing and profitable light. We shall be presented with that adorable view of the wisdom and goodness of God in his moral government, which will inspire us with confidence and

[a] Deut. xxxii. 4.

love towards him, and a filial reverential fear before him.

We are informed concerning God, in the words of inspiration which head this chapter, that "all his ways are judgment." The original word which is here rendered judgment, and from which the word judgment generally comes in the Scriptures, signifies, in its most literal definition, *light*, *discernment*, and *decision*. From the same root comes the Latin *cerno*, to *discern* or *see*. With God, therefore, judgment is a discernment and decision of what is right. It is sometimes used to express his discernment and decision of what is right in general; sometimes, his discernment and decision of what is right in particular cases; and not unfrequently it signifies the *execution* of these Divine decisions. In the words, "all his ways are judgment," the sentiment expressed is, that all the ways and works of God proceed upon a wise and just decision of what is good and right.

But we shall not attempt at present to examine the judgment of God in *all* his ways. It must suffice for the labors of this chapter, to consider the judgment of God in the ways of his government and discipline over his intelligent and moral creatures.

I. The first step in the establishment of a moral government over mankind, was the giving to them of suitable *laws*. And though this work of God is not usually designated in the Scriptures by the term judgment, yet this is one of the "ways" of God, which required and received the direction of true and perfect judgment. If laws had been given without a right discernment and decision, they might have been unsuited to the constitution, the capacity, the wants and circumstances of mankind. But God has wisely adapted

his laws to the constitution of his creatures, for the promotion of their happiness. He did not give laws to his creatures for his own benefit; nor was it either for their injury, or for mere sport; but it was for their *good*. He knew man, he knew his capacities and wants; for he created him. And he failed not to institute such laws as evince the perfection of his judgment.

Hence David sang in those strains of grateful praise, which we transcribed into the preceding chapter; "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple. The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the honey-comb. Moreover by them is thy servant warned, and in keeping of them there is great reward."[b] And the wisdom of God says to the children of men, "My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments; for length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. Let not mercy and truth forsake thee; bind them about thy neck; write them upon the tablet of thine heart: so shalt thou find favor, and good understanding in the sight of God and man."[c] Again, "Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them."[d]

A good understanding of this subject is of indispensable importance to the moral health of the community. There are many, including even some pro-

[b] *Ps. xix. 7—11.* [c] Prov. iii. 1—4. [d] Ps. cxix. 165.

fessors of religion, who seem to imagine that the law of God is an arbitrary rule, imposing restraints and penances, which are inconsistent with their best earthly enjoyment. Of what exceeding value would it be to them to know, that the laws of God respect solely the moral and physical health and happiness of men. Then would they say, in the language of the Psalmist, "I hate and abhor lying; but thy law do I love."

II. I will, in the second place, bring to view, in its Scripture light, the judgment of God, in relation to discipline, or to the execution of rewards and punishments on men according to their treatment of the law. It is to this operation of the Divine government that the word judgment is most commonly applied in the Scriptures, when used in relation to the ways of God. And I expect to show that the judgment of God in this respect, is not the mere pronunciation of an arbitrary sentence on the human race at the end of time, but that it is an ever operative branch of the Divine government, taking continual cognizance of the actions of men, deciding and executing what is right in relation to every man's deserts.

If we suppose that God permits men to sin without a retribution in the present life, and that in the future world he will execute a judgment which shall shut the door of reformation and of mercy against millions of his creatures, and doom them to wickedness and woe forever,—we thus ascribe to God a judgment which is in opposition to the spirit of his law. For we have seen that he gave his children laws in love, having no design therein but their good. Therefore the retributive judgment of God, which is according to the spirit of his law, will emplov no penalty or punishment but

what is consistent with a regard to the good of mankind.

Indeed, the retributive judgment of God is the discernment of human desert, and the *execution* of the awards provided in the law. Therefore we shall not find in the Scripture records of judgment, the revelation of any new principle of retribution, but of the execution, the carrying into effect, of the provisions of the law, with regard to the recompense of human doings. Consequently the subject of this chapter is but the *carrying* out of the principles embraced in the two preceding, on the Law and its Penalties. The LAW, the PENALTIES, and the JUDGMENT, will be found to constitute three connected links in that golden chain of "CHRISTIAN DIVINITY," which, encircling the intelligent creation, is fastened to the throne of God.

I have said that the retributive judgment of God is not the mere passing of an arbitrary sentence on the human race at the end of time, but that it is an ever operative branch of the Divine government, continually taking cognizance of the actions of men, deciding and executing what is right in relation to every man's deserts. In support of this position we have the full and lucid evidence of Scripture. See the commencement of this administration of judgment, with the commencement of God's exercise of his moral government over his children. To the first pair of our race, God delivered his law, which they soon transgressed. The law threatened, as its penalty in case of disobedience, an evil which is expressed, in the record, by the appellation *death*, to be suffered by them on the *day* in which they should transgress. And on the same day when they had contracted the

guilt of sin, the judgment was set, the account was opened, and sentence was pronounced in accordance with the law. And there was no evil here embraced, either in the previous threatening of the law, or in the subsequent award of the judgment, that extended farther than to the time when they should "*return unto the dust.*"[e]

We will pass on to the case of that heinous sinner, that first murderer, Cain. When he had wickedly slain his brother, his Maker and Lawgiver called him to judgment. The Judge said unto the criminal, "What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground." Thus he is pronounced guilty of the crime. And here follows the sentence: "And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength. A fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be on the earth."[f] This was not a mere *prelude* to a punishment. It was not the doing of an inferior court, binding over to a future judgment for the same offence. It was Cain's full and final judgment for that crime; and it caused him to cry out in the anguish of his soul, "My punishment is greater than I can bear."

Passing a little further on in the sacred record, we come to the judgment of the old world, which was drowned by the waters of a flood. "And God said unto Noah, the end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence, through them; and behold, I will destroy them from the earth."[g] Accordingly the Lord brought a flood upon the face of the earth, which destroyed all flesh, except Noah and

[e] Gen. iii. 16—19. [f] Gen. iv. 9—12. [g] Gen. vi. 13.

them that were with him in the ark. In this case of judgment, the crime proved is the general depravity of the inhabitants of the world; the sentence pronounced and executed, is, their destruction from the earth; and the object seems to be the putting of a stop to this prevailing wickedness, and the purification of the earth, to make it a better residence for other generations who should come.

Further on, our attention is arrested by the narrative of God's judgment on Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities of the plain. The angels of the Lord warned Lot to escape with his family from the city of Sodom, saying, "For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord, and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it." "Then the Lord rained upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of heaven. And he overthrew those cities, and all the plain, and all the inhabitants of the cities, and that which grew upon the ground."[h] Because the desolation effected by this fire was designed to be perpetual, at least for many ages, St. Jude calls it *aionion* fire. He speaks of Sodom and Gomorrah as being set forth for an example to others, "suffering the vengeance of *aionion* fire."[i] And what Jude calls the vengeance of *aionion* fire, St. Peter, bringing the case forward for an example, in the same manner, expresses by their being turned into ashes, and condemned to an overthrow: "And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto them that after should live ungodly."[j]

Again, with regard to the retributive judgment of God, he said unto Abraham, "Know of a surety that

[h] Gen. xix. 13, 24, 25. [i] Jude 7. [j] 2 Pet. ii. 6.

thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And also, that nation whom they shall serve, will I judge; and afterwards shall they come out with great substance."[k] This judgment, according to the word of God to Abraham, was indeed executed on Egypt, when God, with a mighty hand, delivered the Hebrews from iron bondage there. And if we trace the history of the dealings of God with his chosen people, the Hebrews, subsequently to their departure out of Egypt, we shall perceive that he kept up the administration of his moral government by the exercise of an operative judgment. He did not leave them, nor indeed this whole wide world of moral beings, without a judgment. From day to day, from week to week, and from year to year, he gave them demonstrative proof of what the Scriptures declare, that "Verily he is a God that judgeth in the earth,"[l] and that "The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner."[m]

In the legal covenant which God gave to the people by Moses, embracing the moral law which had been in substance communicated to all generations from the beginning, with the addition of a ceremonial institution, he announced all the evils to which they might by sin be subjected on the score of punishment, as well as all the blessings to which they might be entitled by their virtue, on the score of just and merited reward. For a full exposition of this subject, the reader is referred to the preceding chapter.

With regard to the teachings and warnings of the prophets concerning the retributive judgment of God, they are all founded on the principles of the Divine

[k] Gen. xv. 13. [l] Ps. lviii. 11. [m] Prov. xi. 31.

laws before given, through the patriarchs, and Moses. Their teachings and warnings on this subject are in unison with those of the patriarchs and of Moses, presenting the continued exercise of judgment, as a part of the ever active government of God, over his moral and accountable creatures. Solomon, in his prayer at the dedication of the temple, uttered this petition: "If any man trespass against his neighbor, and an oath be laid upon him to cause him to swear, and the oath come before thine altar in this house, then hear thou in heaven, and do, and judge thy servants, condemning the wicked, to bring his way upon his head; and justifying the righteous, to give him according to his righteousness." [n] Hence we perceive that Solomon's praying was in accordance with his preaching. When he prayed that God would judge the righteous and the wicked, to bring upon each the just recompense of his doings, his prayer was in agreement with what he faithfully preached; as, for instance, in the passage before quoted, "Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth, much more the wicked and the sinner."

David, speaking of the then present and continued operation of the government of God, said, "Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, for thou renderest unto every man according to his work." [o] And again, "God judgeth the righteous, and God is angry with the wicked every day." [p] This judgment and anger of the Lord are spoken of as being exercised simultaneously, and not as being put off to the end of time. It was in operation every day. The words, "with the wicked," in this passage, are added by the translators; but the succeeding context seems to require the supply

[n] *1 Kings* viii. 31, 32. [o] Ps. lxii. 12. [p] Ps. vii. 11.

of these words, in order to express the full sense of the text. The anger of the Lord is the ardor and condemnatory operation of his government against the wicked; and this, forget it not, is every day. The same writer says again, "The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth."[q] Not that he shall never be known until time is lost in the bosom of eternity, because he shall never till then execute judgment: "The Lord *is* known by the judgment which he *executeth*;" for, it is added, "The wicked is snared in the work of his own hands." This was one means by which he executed judgment upon them; it was by snaring them in their own evils. It is not admitted by all, that those evils which men suffer, in consequence of sin, by and from their own iniquity, are punishments proceeding from the judgment of God. But we discover from the Scriptures that they are of that character. It was with reference to those very evils on sinners that the Psalmist said, "The Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth." He has wisely inwrought a law in the moral and physical constitution of man, and of the world we inhabit, by means of which he executes punishments on transgressors. Accordingly, it is said in Prov. v. 22, "His own iniquities shall take the wicked himself, and he shall be holden with the cords of his sins." And Jer. ii. 19, "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee."

We might continue our quotations from the Old Testament to a great length, in direct support of the position we have assumed, with regard to the present and continual operation of the retributive judgment of

[q] Ps. ix. 16.

God. But a few more quotations must suffice. David, in relation to the judgment of God affecting his own case, said, "For thou hast maintained my right and my cause; thou sattest in the throne, judging right."[r] And in prayer he said, "Lift up thyself, thou Judge of the earth; render a reward to the proud."[s] And with reference to the redemption of Israel, when the Egyptians were cut off, he sang, "Thou didst cause judgment to be heard from heaven; the earth feared, and was still; when God arose to judgment, to save all the meek of the earth."[t]

By the prophet Ezekiel, the Lord said of his transgressing people, "And I scattered them among the heathen; * * * * according to their way, and according to their doings I judged them."[u] And addressing Israel concerning punishments which were about to be executed upon them, he said by the same prophet, "Now will I shortly pour out my fury upon thee, and accomplish mine anger upon thee; and I will judge thee according to thy ways, and will recompense thee for all thine abominations."[v] And the context informs us that the means by which this judgment should be executed upon them, to recompense them for all their abominations, were "the sword without, and the pestilence and famine within." It was not *in part*, that the judgment of God on earth should recompense them; it was for *all* their sins. And this infliction of evil upon that people was not a mere prelude, a slight indication of what should be, of the execution of wrath upon them. It was the *accomplishment*, the recompense *in full*, of the penal sufferings to which they were justly obnoxious. "I will *accomplish* mine anger upon thee."

[r] *Ps. ix. 4.* [s] Ps. xciv. 2 [t] Ps. lxxvi. 9.
[u] *Ezek. xxxvi. 19.* [v] Ezek. vii. 8.

In full confirmation of the view, which we have now taken of the subject before us, as it is presented in the Old Testament Scriptures, St. Paul, the faithful apostle of Christ, adds the following conclusive testimony: "For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?"[w] By "the word spoken by angels," St. Paul meant the law; for he was here drawing a comparison between the law and gospel. And Stephen said, in his address to the Jews, that they had "received the law by the disposition of angels, and had not kept it."[x] St. Paul likewise said to the Galatians, that "the law was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator."[y] And *every* transgression of the law received a just recompense of reward. All the people, for every transgression and disobedience, received a just recompense of reward, through the righteous administration of the judgment of him, who "searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, even to give every man according to his ways." It follows, hence, as a conclusion which we cannot avoid, even if we would, that it is not the manner of the Divine government, at least, that it was not in those former ages, to put off to the future world, either in all or in part, the judgment of men for their deeds on earth. There was no lack of justice in God's government of his family. They received a *just* recompense of reward.

III. Under the preceding head we have brought to view, in its Scriptural light, the judgment of God, in relation to *discipline*, or to the execution of rewards

[w] Heb. ii. 2, 3. [x] Acts vii. 53. [y] Gal. iii. 19.

and punishments on men, according to their treatment of the Divine law. The same judgment will be the principal subject of this third division; but we shall here discuss *God's judgment of the world by Jesus Christ;* and chiefly as it is presented in the New Testament.

The holy prophets had spoken beforehand concerning the judgment of Christ. Isaiah had said, in evangelical prophecy, "Behold my servant whom I uphold, mine elect in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. * * A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench; he shall bring forth judgment unto truth." (The evangelist quotes it thus: "He shall bring forth judgment unto victory.") "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law."[a] It appears that the word judgment is here used for Christ's government or kingdom. When he should set judgment in the earth, the isles should wait for his law. That is, they should wait for the law of truth and love, which his judgment, his government or kingdom, would administer. And in the preceding phrase, "He shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles," the meaning seems to be, that he should extend to the Gentiles the benefits of his kingdom. The nature and operation of this government or kingdom of Messiah is learned by reading onwards. "Thus saith God, the Lord, * * I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the

[a] Isa. xlii. 1—4.

prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." It is hence seen that the judgment of Christ here spoken of, is a kingdom of light, truth and love, the influence of which delivers the human mind from the prison of darkness, sin and death.

This judgment of Christ was again spoken of by the same prophet, as follows: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, * * and shall make him quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord; and he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither reprove after the hearing of his ears: but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked."[a] Then follows a poetic description of the blessed and happy effects of this execution of the judgment of Christ, in smiting and slaying the wicked: "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them." Such is the prophet's poetic description of the loveliness and gentleness of the moral world, to be effected by the judgment or kingdom of Jesus Christ. It is, perhaps, the prevailing sentiment in the popular theology of our day, that when Christ shall sit upon the throne of his glory to judge the children of men, the execution of his judgment will bar the door of reformation forever, and doom all sinners to a hardened and irrecoverable state of sin and woe. But such a judgment the wisdom of heaven has

[a] Isa. xi. 1—4.

never planned, nor will Christ ever execute it. All the judgments of God are designed to effect some change for good. The execution of the judgment of Christ, as we have seen, instead of sealing forever the eyes of the blind, and barring the prison-doors of sinners, is designed to open the blind eyes, to break open the prison-doors, and to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house. Instead of ordering that sinners shall eternally continue in sin, it will smite and slay the wicked, so that the most stubborn and lion-like spirits of rebellion shall be subdued into the submissive gentleness of the peaceful lamb.

After speaking, as above quoted, of the judgment that was to be exercised by the righteous branch which should spring forth from the root of Jesse, the prophet adds, "And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek; and his rest shall be glorious." To the same day, and to the same judgment, St. Paul seems to have had reference, when, in his address to the Athenians, he said: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent; because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead."[b] We are aware that many have understood this to speak of a judgment in the future world, which shall decide the eternal states of men according to their characters on earth. But this would make entirely without sense, the *reason* which the apostle assigns why the ministry of repentance should *now*, more than in former ages, be sent

[b] Acts xvii. 30, 31.

unto all men. If he spoke of a judgment in the unseen world, by which the final states of all men of all ages are to be determined according to their conduct on the earth, how should this fact be a reason why all men, Gentiles as well as Jews, should have the ministry of repentance *now*, more than in the former ages? That would be no reason for such a difference. But understanding this language of the apostle to refer to the same judgment, and the same day, or dispensation of judgment, of which the prophet spake in the instances we have quoted, the whole appears consistent. The former times of ignorance with the Gentile nations, God winked at, or suffered to remain. The idea is expressed in Acts xiv. 16, in other words, thus, —"Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways." The revelations of God in former times extended not unto the Gentiles. But God had appointed a dispensation, called here, as in the prophet, a *day*, in which he would set up, by Christ Jesus, a judgment or kingdom of light and truth, which should be calculated to extend its benefits to all nations, Gentiles as well as Jews. He should bring forth judgment to the Gentiles. In the fulness of the appointed time, Christ Jesus came, and established his judgment in the world. This appointed dispensation of Christ's kingdom and judgment had commenced in St. Paul's time; and this was certainly a good reason why the ministry of it, calling on men to repent, or turn themselves to the reception of its saving benefits, should *then* be extended to all men, Gentiles as well as Jews,—to them who were afar off, as well as to them who were nigh. We think it likely, from the similarity of expression, that St. Paul had in his mind the passage above quoted from the prophet, when he

addressed this to the Athenians. For, like the prophet, he speaks of the judgment of *Christ*, and of his "judging in righteousness," and calls the time of his judging "a day." And in speaking of the propriety of calling, at that time, on all men everywhere to repent, the apostle probably had his mind on the prophet's saying, that in that day he should stand as an ensign to the people, unto which "the Gentiles should seek." And that the judgment of Christ spoken of in the passages which we have quoted from the prophet, is his kingdom, which commenced on earth at the close of the Jewish dispensation, is rendered further apparent by St. Matthew, in the application which he makes, in his Gospel, of one of these prophetic sayings: (Matt. xii. 14,)—"Then the Pharisees went out and held a council against him how they might destroy him. But when Jesus knew it, he withdrew himself from thence; and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all; and charged them that they should not make him known: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles. He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory. And in his name shall the Gentiles trust."

But in the day or dispensation of the judgment or government of the world by Jesus Christ, there is also a retributive judgment, as well as under the former dispensation. St. Paul testifies, that "God will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who,

by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality, [*literally* incorruptness,] eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil; but glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God. For as many as have sinned without law, [*i. e.* without the written law,] shall also perish without law; and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law, * * in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel."[c] It is hence perceived that the judgment of God, in its cognizance of the moral actions of men, is the same now, under the reign of Jesus Christ by his gospel, that it was under the reign of the patriarchs, and of Moses and the prophets, by their inspired teachings. Then, every work was brought into judgment, and every secret thing, and there was verily "a reward to the righteous," and "every transgression received a just recompense of reward." And so it is now, when God judges the works, and even the "secret things" of men, by Jesus Christ. He will render to every man according to his deeds. He will award tribulation and anguish to every one that doeth evil; and glory, honor, and peace, to every one that doeth good.

God's judgment, under the Christian dispensation, is administered on the same principle on which it was conducted in former ages, it being according to men's deserts; varying in its awards, of course, according to the different degrees of guilt: as St. Paul said in

[c] Rom. ii. 6—16.

his address to the Hebrews, which we have noticed, "If the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression received a just recompense of reward; how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him." This great salvation is the record of truth and grace spoken by Christ and his witnesses, and confirmed by signs and wonders. And the idea expressed in this place is, that if the Hebrews should neglect and abuse the greater opportunities they enjoyed from these more full and mighty proofs of truth, they would be recompensed with sorer calamities than had ever been suffered by their fathers; and calamities, too, which they could not escape. For if others, who were before them, received a full punishment for all their sins, they, for their greater sins, could not escape their just, their greater punishment. He introduces here no new kind of judgment, set up in another world, but teaches their responsibility to the same principle of judgment which had fully recompensed others in the earth, and would recompense them with a punishment no more severe than in proportion as their guilt was greater.

Concerning the greater punishment which the Hebrews should receive in the judgment coming on that generation, and which should be especially suffered by any Hebrew Christians who should apostatize, the apostle speaks directly in Heb. x. 28: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy, under two or three witnesses. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sancti-

fied, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?" That this relates to a punishment which should be administered in the judgment coming on that generation, is evident from what precedes the passage. The apostle had just exhorted the Hebrews, saying, "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised; and let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhort one another; and so much the more, *as ye see the day approaching;*" that is, the day of their judgment or trial. "For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."

The meaning of the apostle in this place is plain: If any of the Hebrews who had received the knowledge of the truth, should wilfully, or from sinister motives, abandon the Christian cause, they would feel condemned; and knowing that the sacrifices of the Mosaic law were done away in Christ, they could no more relieve their consciences by offering these legal sacrifices for sin. They would remember the teachings and warnings of Christ concerning the great distress that should come upon their land, and the wrath that should devour that people; and they would be troubled with a fearful looking for of that threatened judgment, and that fiery indignation which should devour the adversaries of the gospel. The punishment administered by that judgment, was indeed a sorer punishment upon the Jews in general, than any which had before been suffered. For Jesus

said concerning that event, "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." And surely the apostatized Christians, who, in that unheard-of tribulation, had "their portion with the hypocrites,"[d] were the most miserable of that unhappy people.

This particular instance of judgment, because it was designed in its results to fulfil the words of Christ, to put down the persecution of his cause, to establish and extend his kingdom in the world, and to exalt his name in power and glory among men,—was called in a special manner the coming of Christ in his power and kingdom, and his executing judgment from the throne of the Father's glory; as in Matt. xvi. 27, 28: "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father, with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works. Verily I say unto you, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." And Matt. xxiv. 30: "And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds. * * Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled." And having thus fixed the general time of this coming of his in judgment, he resumes the mention of the same event, in the last paragraph of the same discourse, to give a further description of the attending circumstances: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he

[d] Matt. xxiv. 21, 51.

sit upon the throne of his glory; and before him shall be gathered all nations." The gathering of the people, or of the nations, is a familiar form of expression in the Old Testament, to denote the widely prevailing effects of such Divine judgments as were the subjects of discourse. And as this judgment was designed to introduce believers into a renewed and enlarged enjoyment of those gospel blessings which are called "everlasting life," and to pour upon the unbelieving Jews that punishment which the prophet represented by "a fire that should not be quenched,"[e] and "an everlasting reproach,"[f] so Jesus here describes it as introducing some into "everlasting life," and others into "everlasting punishment."[g] On the meaning of the word *everlasting* in this case, we need not here occupy room to argue, for it was settled in the preceding chapter. I will here add, that it is conceded by all that this word, when applied to events of time, is used in a limited sense; and it is plain that in this case it is applied to a punishment which has been executed on the earth. It is no other punishment than what Moses and the prophets forewarned the Jews that they should suffer, if they should bring to a certain crisis their moral corruptness. And surely they did not forewarn the people of any other punishments than what were comprehended in "all the curses of the law."[h]

The exceeding severity of this particular judgment, which was executed at the coming of Christ in the end of the Jewish age, is expressed by him in his addresses to the cities of Israel, by way of contrasting it with the judgment of Sodom and Gomorrah, and of

[e] Jer. vii. 20; xvii. 27.
[f] Jer. xxiii. 40.
[g] Matt. xxv. 41, 46.
[h] Deut. xxix. 27.

other cities: "Woe unto thee, Chorazin! Woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in dust and ashes. But I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shall be brought down to *hades;* for if the mighty works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee."[i] We conclude that Jesus did not mean here to teach that Sodom, Tyre and Sidon, were to be literally judged and punished at some future time, because every transgression and disobedience of the words spoken by God's messengers in former ages, had "received a just recompense of reward." And besides, that the temporal judgment of Sodom was referred to, is evident, in that it prevented that city from "continuing unto this day." Jesus was also speaking of the temporal destruction of these cities of Israel. They had been exalted to heaven, but should be cast down to *hades.* As their being exalted to heaven, was their temporal exaltation in the earth, so their reverse of fortune, expressed by being cast down to *hades,* was their temporal destruction. And the time of such destruction to any city or nation, is called the day of judgment, as it regards them. God is said to execute judgment upon them.[j] It seems to have been the meaning of Jesus in this case, that the judgment which should destroy the cities of Israel, would be so much more distressing than that which

[i] *Matt. xi. 21—24.* [j] Gen. xv. 14. Ezek. v. 8; vii. 8; xxv. 17.

destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, that in the day of judgment on those cities, that which Sodom and Gomorrah had suffered would appear light in comparison.

The circumstance that the judgment of Sodom, and that of the Jewish cities, are presented here in one view, by one future tense, has been used as proof that a judgment was here spoken of, which was then future even in regard to the case of the ancient Sodomites. But this argument is seen to have no weight, when viewed in connexion with the circumstances which have now been considered, and the additional fact that the prophets had employed the past wickedness and judgment of Sodom in contrast with the then future wickedness and judgment of Israel, and had brought them together by the use of but one tense: "Thou also which hast judged thy sisters, [Sodom and Samaria,] bear thine own shame, for thy sins which thou hast committed more abominable than they; they *are* more righteous than thou."[k] And again, "The punishment of the iniquity of the daughter of my people is greater than the punishment of the sin of Sodom, overthrown as in a moment and no hands stayed on her."[l] These writers saw in prophetic vision the then future iniquity and punishment of Israel, and they looked also upon the then past iniquity and punishment of Sodom, and presented them together in contrast by the use of one tense, as living cases brought to a present view. Or, if they spoke with reference to the then *present* corruptness and wretchedness of Israel in the Babylonish captivity, it alters not the fact that the then past punishment of Sodom was brought forward, and placed in contrast

[k] *Ezek. xvi. 52.* [l] Lam. iv. 6.

with the punishment of Israel, by the use of one tense. And this is precisely what our Lord did in the place above quoted. He took the judgment of Sodom, which, though past, yet lived before the people in the faithful records which were read every Sabbath-day amongst them, and by the use of one tense, he presented it in contrast with that judgment on the cities of Israel which was then the subject of discourse.[m]

Another important passage in relation to the judgment of Christ is in Hebrews ix. 27. "And as it is appointed unto [the] men once to die, but after this the judgment; so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, [without a sin-offering,] unto salvation."

It appears that *its being appointed unto men once to die*, is used as a figure of Christ's being once offered to bear the sins of many. *Christ* was once offered to bear the sins of the many, *as* it is appointed unto *men* once to die. What death, and the death of what men, does Paul speak of in this chapter as a figure of the

[m] Dr. Hammond, whose prejudices might have inclined him to make a different application of these words of our Lord, was constrained by the evidence in the case to explain them as we have in this article. On the expression, "It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment than for thee," he gives the following paraphrase: "And therefore you in all reason are to expect a sadder destruction and vastation, than that which befell Sodom and Gomorrah." Bp. Pearce explains this Scripture in the same way; and the opinion of Dr. Clarke preponderates in favor of the same application: "Day of judgment," he says, "may either refer to that particular time in which God visits for iniquity, or to that great day in which he will judge the world by the Lord Jesus Christ. The day of Sodom's judgment was that in which it was destroyed by fire and brimstone from heaven, Gen. xix. 24; and the day of judgment to Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, was the day in which they were destroyed by the Romans." *See also Universalist Expositor, Vol. 3. pp. 27, 28.*

death of Christ? And what judgment did these men enter into after this death, as a figure of Christ's appearing the second time without a sin-offering unto salvation; or of his entering "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us?" By carefully reading this chapter, you will discover that the apostle is making mention of the yearly sacrifices made by those men who ministered in the priestly office, as figurative of Christ's being once offered for the sins of the many. The high priest under the law had to die—by proxy, or to signify his death by offering a sacrifice, *once* each time of entering into the inner court, or place of judgment; which was once a year. After signifying his death for the nation, by offering sacrifices for himself and all the people, the law directed that the priest should go into the inner court with the blood of the sacrifice. And there he must "bear the names of the children of Israel in the breast-plate of judgment;" and "bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart." But this going into "the judgment," bearing the judgment of the people in the breast-plate upon his heart, could not be until after he had slain his sacrifice, or died by proxy, in the outer court. (See Lev. xvi. and Ex. xxviii.) Then the *judgment* of the holy place was the redemption of the people.

But "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true," says our apostle, "but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; for then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world; but now once. in the end of the world,

(age,) hath he appeared, to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. "And as it is appointed,"—observe the connexion,—"*And as* it is appointed unto men," *the* men, it reads in the original; i. e. the men who ministered in the priestly office, "once to die," or signify their death by their sacrifice, "and after this the judgment," i. e. after this they could go into the place of judgment, or holy place, and obtain the assurance of the temporal salvation of the people; "so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time," or in his risen state of glory, in his judgment, "without a sin-offering unto salvation."

No subject could be rendered more plain than the connexion renders this. It does not appear that Paul had any reference here to the natural death of all men, and a judgment for trial and retribution after that. And even if he had, it would fall infinitely short of proving that the retribution is what our opposers assert. But he who candidly reads the whole of this chapter, will clearly see that the apostle speaks of the sacrifices of the priests under the law, and their afterwards entering into the judgment or holy place, as figurative of Christ's being once offered, and afterwards entering into his kingdom and glory, at the right hand of the throne of God.

From the facts above noticed, it will be seen that the word *judgment* in this case does not directly refer to Christ, but to the holy place into which the high priest entered once a year, after dying in the sacrifice in the outer court. And the judgment of Christ, of which this is introduced as a figure, is to be understood in the more comprehensive sense of his *kingdom*, *as in the* prophetic Scriptures before referred to.

St. Paul, in 2 Cor. v. 10, testifies of our amenability to the judgment of Christ, in the following impressive language:—"For we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things in body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad."*

We omit in this quotation the word *done*, which was supplied by the translators, because it encumbers the sense. Reading as it correctly does from the original, it distinctly testifies of a present judgment and retribution. The subject of the apostle in this connexion is that of our accountability to the authority of Christ, now and ever. In the preceding verse he says, "Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, (or, as the general subject explains his meaning, whether in this life or another,) we may be accepted of him." The idea is, that it is not alone for acceptance in another life that we are laboring; happiness is as valuable now as ever. We are God's moral, accountable children, and it is only by living the life and receiving the approbation of our blessed Master, that we can be said truly to *live*. Yes, even *now* we are amenable to Christ the Lord. We must all appear (φανερωθῆναι, be manifest) before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things (here) in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." If this were forced to such an application as to make it testify of distinct and final retributions, and endless, too, in the future world, for the deeds of men on earth, it would require that those who have done some good and some evil on earth, as most men have, shall be both rewarded and punished, blessed and cursed, made happy and miserable, to all eternity! For the testi-

* To the same purport is Rom. xiv. 10.

mony is, that *every* one shall receive according to that he hath done, *whether it be good or bad.* But in the light in which this passage, with its context, now stands, the sentiment is beautifully consistent. It is the same as that which has been quoted from the prophet, (Ezek. xviii.,) teaching that the sinner shall die, or suffer the condemnation of the law, *in his sins;* but that if he will turn from his iniquities and do that which is lawful and right, *in his righteousness* that he doeth he shall live. Thus is every man made to receive according to his deeds, good or bad.

There is another important idea in this Scripture doctrine concerning the judgment of Christ. It places his *judgment-seat* in his *kingdom.* It makes Christ the Judge while he is the Ruler, and his judgment a coöperative branch of his kingdom. So it should be Who ever heard of a government without a judgment, —putting the judgment off till the government shall have ended? What good father has a family government without a judgment, deferring all judgment and discipline till he shall have lost his government? None. The parental judgment is a coöperative branch of the family government. Yet many have believed that the judgment of Christ is to be postponed until his kingdom is given up. Such views are the blackness of darkness. They find no favor from the Word of God. From this source we have learned, that when God commenced the exercise of his moral government over his children, he commenced the administration of his judgment. In every age he "searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins, even to give every man according to his ways." (Jer. xvii. 10.) In these latter days he exerciseth judgment by Jesus Christ. The judgment of Christ is, as we have seen, in its most

comprehensive sense, synonymous with his kingdom. In the more restricted sense, applying to discernment of character and execution of penalties, it is an ever active branch of his government, concurring to the great consummation, when he shall resign his kingdom to the Father, having subdued all things unto himself.

It is needless to multiply quotations from the Scriptures in relation to our general subject. We have already carried our examination of the Scriptures to a sufficient extent, to ascertain with satisfactory clearness, that this world of moral creatures is not left without a Divine judgment, and without a Supreme Judge; but that the Lord "is a God that judgeth in the earth," and that he "rendereth unto every man according to his works;" that he is the Judge while he is the Governor of the world; that he commenced an operative system of judgment when he commenced the exercise of his government over his moral creatures; in short, that a retributive judgment, rendering to accountable creatures according to their deserts, is a perpetual and coöperative branch of the Divine government.

Most of the passages which we have quoted on the subject of retributive judgment, relate to *external* and *visible* judgments on particular people, executed at sundry times and in divers manners. But these bear fully on the question of the perfect subjection of the inhabitants of earth to the righteous judgment of God; for these executions of visible punishment are represented as filling up the measure of retribution, according to that of demerit in the people. There is also a constant operation of Divine judgment, meting out rewards and punishments to mankind, by the administration of internal happiness or misery according to their characters. The Scriptures do not abound in his-

tories of particular executions of this species of retribution, as of the external judgments, because it is common and invisible. But it is comprehended in the general terms by which the subject of retributive judgment is often expressed; as in the following examples: "Thou renderest to every man according to his work." "In keeping them [the judgments of God] there is great reward." "Great peace have they which love thy law, and nothing shall offend them." "But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked." "Destruction and misery are in their ways, and the way of peace have they not known." "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."[n] The Scriptures abound with testimonies, of which these are a specimen, disallowing the sentiment that the only recompense, or reward and punishment, executed by the judgment of God on earth, is in those cases of external and visible judgment, many of which are made the subjects of prophetic and historical record. "The anger of the Lord,"—that is, the condemnatory operation of the Divine judgment,—is against the wicked "every day."[o] But when the sins of individuals or of communities assume a certain character, and attain to a certain degree, He who searches the heart, perceives that their case requires the addition of some external and visible punishment, to fill up the measure of their deserts, and to operate as a necessary check on their career, and a warning to others.

[n] Ps. lxii. 12; xix. 11. Isa. lvii. 20, 21. Rom. iii. 16, 17. Jer. xvii. 10.
[o] Ps. vii. 11.

"We are aware that there are some who contend, that however full and clear may be the evidence of Scripture for this doctrine of an ever operative and just judgment, it does not agree with fact. And they adduce certain cases of persons, of different characters, on earth, in which they say the doctrine of a just retribution does not hold true. But such will do well to consider, in humbleness of mind before God, that they can only look at the outward appearance; that they cannot correctly judge either of other men's moral deserts, or of the amount of their happiness or misery. But God looketh at the heart. He "searcheth the heart, and trieth the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." If any assert that in some given case it is not true that God judges the heart to render a just recompense, the burden of proof is upon his hand. But the impossibility of producing the evidence of such a fact in any case, may discover to him the folly and presumption of opposing his own judgment to the judgment of God. Many an honest confession from persons who have run a sinful career. has exposed the error of such as had judged them from outward appearance. Tiberius was doubtless envied by thousands, for his rank, and his supposed enjoyment. He had every means which earth could afford to gratify his sensual appetites; and by the course he pursued he evinced a determination that, if happiness were to be found in sin, it should be his to enjoy. But the desired happiness was not there. We are shown by the following letter from him to the Roman Senate, that he received in himself, from the judgment of God, "that recompense for his errors which was meet:"[p] "What to write, conscript fa-

[p] Rom. i. 27.

thers, in what terms to express myself, or what to refrain from writing, is a matter of such perplexity, that if I know how to decide, may the just gods and the goddesses of vengeance doom me to die in pangs, worse than those under which I linger every day!"[q] On this, Tacitus, the heathen historian, makes the following pertinent remarks: "We have here the features of the inward man. His crimes retaliated upon him with the keenest retribution; so true is the saying of the great philosopher,[r] the oracle of ancient wisdom, that if the minds of tyrants were laid open to our view, we should see them gashed and mangled with the whips and stings of horror and remorse. By blows and stripes the flesh is made to quiver; and in like manner, cruelty and inordinate passions, malice and evil deeds, become internal executioners, and with unceasing torture goad and lacerate the heart. Of this truth Tiberius is a melancholy instance. Neither the imperial dignity, nor the gloom of solitude, nor the rocks of Capreæ, could shield him from himself. He lived on the rack of guilt, and his wounded spirit groaned in agony." Hence, it is perceived that the reason and observation of philosophers discover, in real life, the fact, which attests the doctrine that we have seen so fully asserted in the Scriptures, in relation to the judgment of God.

It is presumed that none will dispute there having been, under the administration of the law in former ages, as many of the description of cases from which some argue the failure of a righteous retribution, as there are under the present dispensation. Yet St. Paul testifies that "every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward." And in

[q] *Annals of* Tacitus, B. vi., § 6. [r] Socrates.

the same sentence he assures us, in the form of an interrogatory assertion, that others must inevitably receive according to their deserts, from the same just administration of the Divine judgment.[s] There is no way to be free from the misery of sin, but to be free from sin. And we gratefully rejoice that God will execute judgment through Jesus, even unto the destruction of the works of the devil,[t] which are sin and its concomitant evils.

Reader, our subject is important. You are in pursuit of happiness; and if you ever choose a course of moral wrong, it is because you do not practically believe in the doctrine of Divine judgment which we have here presented from the Scriptures. Let these words of apostolic wisdom be engraved on the tablet of your heart: "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace and ensue it."[u]

[s] For the writer's view of the consistency of this doctrine with that of forgiveness as taught in the Scriptures, see the next chapter of this work, entitled *Punishment and Forgiveness*.

[t] John iii. 8. 1 Cor. xv. 24—28. [u] 1 Peter iii. 10, 11.

# CHAPTER VII.

## PUNISHMENT AND FORGIVENESS.

Such is the title which we appropriate to this chapter; because, while its main subject is that of Forgiveness, I design to present it in such connection with that of Punishment, as to evince their harmony with each other. To do this in a manner the most familiar and intelligible to the reader, I must occasionally recapitulate certain principles which I have argued at length in some of the foregoing chapters.

I. The Scriptures of the Old Testament teach that *God renders to every man according to his work;*[a] and they also proclaim the Lord God merciful and gracious, *forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin.*[b] Nor is either of these doctrines of the Old Testament abrogated under the Gospel dispensation. The Scriptures of the New Testament expressly state, that *God will render to every man according to his deeds*, in the day (or dispensation) when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ;[c] and also that he hath exalted Jesus Christ to be a Prince and Saviour, to give *repentance and forgiveness of sins.*[d] These two important doctrines of the Bible have been so defined by a respectable class of Christians, as to appear inconsistent with each other. They hold that the sentence of the law against transgressors, in recompense to them according to their deserts, is their consignment to end-

[a] Deut. xxx. 15. Ps. lxii. 12. Prov. xi. 31. Ezek. xviii.
[b] Ex. xxxiv. 7. Ps. xxv. 11, 18. Jer. xxxi. 34.
[c] Rom. ii. 6—16. [d] Acts v. 31; xi. 18.

less punishment. And as "all have sinned," the just desert of *all* is the aforesaid endless punishment. Yet the class of Christians of whom I speak, notwithstanding they believe that the just desert of all men is eternal misery, and though they urge it as the plain doctrine of God's word that every man shall be dealt with according to his desert, do not mean to be understood as believing that all men shall be made to suffer that deserved recompense of misery. For the doctrine of *forgiveness*, they say, is likewise a doctrine of the Scriptures; and they hope that God, through the exercise of forgiveness, will make millions of sinners to be participants of eternal happiness in heaven. Thus the sinner's hope of final happiness is made to be the hope of an escape from his deserved punishment.

Indeed, *forgiveness* has commonly been understood to be *the clearing of a person from some incurred penalty*. How then shall the person who is tempted to sin, know what to expect from the threatening of God's law? If Divine forgiveness be a deliverance from deserved punishment, then, though God has positively declared that he will render to *every* man according to his deserts, yet he may render to *no* man according to his deserts,—nor *can* he punish any to whom he extends forgiveness. In this way the doctrines of punishment and forgiveness are set in opposition to each other; and many, while they profess to be strenuous advocates both for the doctrine of Divine forgiveness, and of God's rendering to every man according to his works, do, in the very labors in which they undertake to urge these doctrines, alternately deny them both. In urging the doctrine of the *punishment of sinners*, they preclude the possibility of their ever being forgiven, and in urging the doctrine

of the *forgiveness of sinners*, they preclude the possibility of every man's being recompensed according to his deserts.

But I hope to be able to show to the satisfaction of the candid reader, that there is no inconsistency between the doctrines of punishment and forgiveness, as taught in the sacred Scriptures. The better to accomplish our purpose, we will view the two subjects both separately and in connection with each other.

In the first place we will take a brief review of the teachings of the Scriptures concerning the *punishment of sinners*. In the 18th chapter of Ezekiel there is recorded a kind of *judicial decision*, from the court of Heaven, upon the meaning of the Divine law, about which the people had fallen into mistakes. "The word of the Lord came unto me again, saying, What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge? As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him." Hereby we are informed that the law of God makes the *wages of sin* to be *death*. Not *eternal* death, however, or *endless* punishment, as they affirm whose sentiment has been before stated. The death pronounced on sinners by the Divine law is only to be coëxtensive in duration with sin. To this point the word of God proceeds to say,—"But if the wicked will turn from all his sins

that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him; in his righteousness that he hath done he shall live." Hence we learn that it is the principle of Divine law, the justice of the government of Heaven, that when a sinner has turned from the way of sin, and walks in the possession and practice of the principles of godliness, he is no longer a subject of that condemnation or death which is the just portion of sinners. Justice condemns him only while he is a sinner. And since the Divine law does neither ordain nor predict that men shall always continue in the character of sinners, it does not determine that any shall be subjects of eternal death.

This view of the death or punishment of sin, that its duration is measured by men's continuing in the character of sinners, accords with the experience of all who have been reformed. St. John says, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death."[e] He and his Christian brethren, when they were in the spirit of opposition to the law of God, were in that death which is the wages of sin. On them was executed what God's law declares, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "For to be carnally-minded is death."[f] But when they turned from the way of sin, and walked in that love which is the fulfilling of the law, they passed from death unto life, and felt that, as far as they were holy, no just law in the universe could condemn them.

What is contained in the word of God by Ezekiel, "The soul that sinneth, it shall die," is expressed in

[e] 1 John iii. 14. [f] Rom. viii. 6.

other words by the apostle Paul, in Rom. ii. 6–10, "Who will render to every man according to his deeds; to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, and honor, and immortality;[g] eternal life;[h] but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath. Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile. But glory, honor, and peace, to every man that worketh good; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile; for there is no respect of persons with God." It is plain from this Scripture that the just punishment of sin is the tribulation and anguish which the disobedient suffer in their sins. This sentiment is also clearly expressed by the same apostle in Rom. iii. 16, 17. "Destruction and misery are in their ways; and the way of peace have they not known." The way of sin is a way of misery, and no true peace is found therein. Consequently,

[g] *Αφθαρσιαν*, Incorruptness, or purity of doctrines and designs.

[h] Aionion life. Some have contended that the punishment of *evil-doers*, spoken of in this passage, is *eternal punishment in the future world*, because the reward of the *well-doers* is *eternal life*. I know that the Christian hopes for an eternity of life and happiness beyond the grave; not however, as the fruit or reward of his present doings, but as the free gift of God's grace. The *aionion life*, which is the Christian's *reward*, is the life and happiness which he receives and enjoys *in believing and obeying the gospel*. In possessing himself of the glory, and honor, and incorruptness of principle which he seeks, he possesses himself of aionion life. As in John v. 24, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting (aionion) life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life." Here what is called *everlasting life*, is also expressed by the single term, *life*; as in 1 John iii. 14, quoted above; and Rom. viii. 6, "To be spiritually minded is life and peace;" and in many other places. And in this passage, the reward which, in verse 7, is called *eternal life*, is, in verse 10, called *glory*, *honor*, and *peace*. The doctrine of an eternity of happiness, as the reward of our good deeds here, is as unscriptural as is the doctrine of an eternity of punishment for our evil deeds.

men must be punished with misery just as long as they walk the sinner's way.

II. Having taken this brief view of the Scripture doctrine concerning the *punishment of sinners*, we will, in the second place, consider the subject of *gospel forgiveness*. The original word translated *forgive* in the New Testament is *aphiemi*, from *apo*, *from*, and *iemi*, *to send*. *To send away*, *dismiss*, *deliver from*. It occurs in Matt. xiii. 36, and is rendered, *sent away*. "Then Jesus *sent* the multitudes *away*." In Mark xv. 37, the same Greek word signifies to *emit*, or *give up*. "And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and *gave up* the ghost." It is also used in 1 Cor. vii. 12, for putting away or dismissing a wife. "If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not *put* her *away*." It also occurs in Matt. iv. 20, 22, and is rendered by the word *left*. "And they straightway *left* their nets and followed him." This word in its substantive form occurs in Luke iv. 18, in the sense of "*dismission*, *deliverance*, or *liberty*, as of captives."[1] "He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach *deliverance* to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at *liberty* them that are bruised." Here the words *deliverance* and *liberty* are from the same Greek word that is rendered *forgiveness*, whenever this latter term is used in the New Testament.

We have been thus particular to give the signification of the word from which *forgiveness* comes in the New Testament, and to present several instances of its Scriptural use, for the purpose of discovering to the reader the importance of proper care in forming his judgment on this subject. We have remarked

[1] Parkhurst on (*Αφεσις*) Aphesis.

before, that *forgiveness* has been commonly understood to mean the clearing of a person from *deserved punishment*. But we find that the word does not, of itself, signify a deliverance from *deserved punishment;* but simply to *send away*, *dismiss*, or *deliver from*. To *dismiss*, or *deliver from what*, must be decided in every case by a reference to the subject unto which it is applied. Accordingly, we find the original word, which is rendered *forgive*, in one case which we have noticed, used for *dismissing* or *sending away* the *multitudes*. In another instance it is used for *dismissing* or *sending away* a *wife*. In another, for *sending out* or *giving up* one's *life*. And in another case which we have noticed, we find the word used for *delivering* from *prison*, from *captivity*, and from *maimedness*. And pursuing this necessary rule of construction, if we find the phrase, forgiveness of *deserved punishment*, we are to receive it as meaning a *deliverance from* deserved punishment.

But such an expression as *forgiveness of punishment*, does not occur in the inspired writings. The gospel forgiveness is the *forgiveness of sins*. "God hath exalted Jesus with his right hand, to be a Prince, and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and *forgiveness of sins*."[1] The *forgiveness* in this case is the *deliverance* spoken of in the passage before quoted from Luke. The same original word occurs in precisely the same form in both cases. In the one case Jesus reads and applies to himself the words of the prophet, "He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach *deliverance* to the captives;" and in the other case, Peter says of Jesus, "Him hath God exalted with his right hand, for to give repentance to

[1] Acts v. 31.

Israel, and *deliverance from sins.*" Now, by giving *deliverance from sins*, Jesus fulfils that saying which he applied to himself, "He hath sent me to preach (or proclaim) *deliverance* to the captives." What kind of forgiveness, liberty, or deliverance is this? Is it, as some have imagined, a deliverance from going to an endless prison of darkness in the future world, as a punishment for sins committed in this? There is nothing in the Scriptures to support such an opinion. It is a deliverance from the dark prison of unbelief, and from the miserable bondage of sin: so that the subject of this deliverance can say, "This I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." "He hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son."[k] "For we have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but we have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, father."[l]

To render the light of our subject the more clear to the careful reader, we will take him to the Scriptures for instruction on the *purpose* and *design* of that gospel, through which we receive forgiveness of sins. See Matt. xviii. 11; "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost." Matt. i. 21; "He shall save his people *from their sins.*" John i. 29; "Behold the Lamb of God, that *taketh away* the *sin of the world.*" Acts iii. 26; "Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in *turning away every one of you from his iniquities.*" Eph. v. 25—27; "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might *sanctify and cleanse* it with the washing of water by the word, that he might present to himself a glorious church, not hav-

[k] Col. i. 13. [l] Rom. viii. 15.

ing spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be *holy, and without blemish.*" 1 Peter iii. 18; "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, *that he might bring us to God.*" Col. i. 19, 20; "For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to *reconcile all things to himself.*" 2 Cor. v. 18, 19; "And all things are of God, who *hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ*, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation, to wit, that God was in Christ *reconciling the world unto himself.*"

Hence we learn that the gospel is not a scheme which God has contrived for clearing sinners from suffering what his own word solemnly pronounced upon them; but it is a plan of redemption from sin and darkness, into that state of holy reconciliation to God, wherein they will no more incur those painful stripes which the law threatens and inflicts upon transgressors. Yes, this is the gospel purpose of God; "To turn away every one of you from his iniquity;" to "sanctify and cleanse" you; to "reconcile you to God," and present you "holy and without blemish." And as far as you are partakers of the gospel *salvation from sin*, and of *reconciliation to God*,—so far you are partakers of the gospel *forgiveness*, or *deliverance from sin.* Of the forerunner of Jesus, it was said, "Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of *salvation* to his people, *by the remission of their sins*, through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet in the way of peace."[m]

[m] Luke i. 76—79.

Here we are informed that the forerunner of the world's Saviour gave the people knowledge concerning that kind of salvation which takes place by the *remission of their sins;* i. e. by *sending away* their sins, or *freeing them from* their sins. And this freeing from sins takes place through the tender mercy of God, whereby he makes the day-spring from on high to visit us, to give light to them that sit in darkness, *to guide our feet in the way of peace.*

Having considered the subjects of *punishment* and *forgiveness, separately*, we will now consider these two subjects in *connexion with each other*, that the reader may see that there is no inconsistency between them as they stand in the Scriptures. On the subject of punishment we have learned that God, in "rendering to every man according to his deeds," will recompense "tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil." Nor does the Scriptural doctrine of forgiveness contradict this sentiment of retribution; for it teaches the forgiveness, not of *deserved punishment*, but of *sins*. This forgiveness of sins frees men from the suffering of that tribulation and anguish which God doth recompense upon every man that doeth evil; yet it does not oppose the doctrine of a just recompense to every man according to his deeds,—for it frees them from the beforementioned tribulation and anguish by freeing them from sin. Then being freed from sin, they are no longer that description of persons upon which the law pronounces its curses.

In the present light of our subject, we can perceive the consistency of the sentence in the writings of Moses, which was referred to in the beginning of this chapter. "The Lord God, merciful and gracious,

long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression, and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty." God, in tender mercy to sinners, employs means in his wise and benevolent government, to reform them, and free them from transgression and sin. And when, by the influence of those means which the Divine government employs, sinners are brought to repentance, or turn from the love and practice of sin, then too they are freed from the guilt and condemnation of sin, and God does not impute to them their sins, or treat them as sinners any longer. They are permitted to enjoy the sweets of communion with God, in the consciousness of the Divine approbation, as if they had never sinned. But while they remain "guilty," walking in the way of transgression, God "will by no means clear" them from the suffering of that death and misery, that tribulation and anguish, which the law makes to be the sinner's just portion. Accordingly, the person who has been forgiven, has suffered the proper punishment of his sins; even as the man who has been healed of a bodily disease has suffered the natural evil of that disease. The sick man is freed from pain by being freed from the disease by which the pain was produced. And when the disease is removed, and the man restored to health, his then experiencing a freedom from pain, and the pleasure of bodily health, is in accordance with, and not opposed to, that organic law of the corporeal system which connects pain with disease; for the same law connects pleasure with health. Even so, when the man who is reformed and forgiven, experiences a freedom from the evil or punishment of sin, and enjoys the pleasure of virtue and truth, this is in accordance with, and *not opposed to,* that Divine moral law, which connects

punishment with sin; for the same law connects a holy and rational pleasure with virtue and truth. The language of this law is, "The righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner."[a] "The soul that sinneth, it shall die,—in his sin that he hath sinned, and in his trespass that he hath trespassed, in them shall he die." "But if the wicked will turn from all his sins that he hath committed, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live. All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not be mentioned unto him; in his righteousness he shall live."[b] Surely this law is not opposed to men's being freed from the *condemnation* or *death* of sin, when they are freed from *sin*.

III. Thus far we have considered the subject of forgiveness in its most comprehensive sense, as applying to the operation of the gospel scheme, in delivering the soul from the love and power of sin, and thus working a freedom from condemnation and fear. But this word, in its more practical, and perhaps more familiar usage, even in the Scriptures, is applied to that concomitant part of the work of spiritual deliverance, which consists in a sensible freedom of the mind from guilt,—a restoration to the privileges of the righteous. In other words, it is the extension to the penitent of the same treatment as if he had never sinned. In the language of the Book, "his sins and iniquities shall be remembered no more."

This form of forgiveness always presupposes genuine repentance, or reformation. For while one is in the life of sin, he cannot be viewed and treated as if he were not a sinner. This would be at war with the

[a] Prov. xi. 31. [b] Ezek. xviii. 4, 21, 22, 24.

whole tenor of both law and gospel. In the day or dispensation of judgment by Jesus Christ, as well as in the Mosaic age, tribulation and anguish shall be upon every soul of man that doeth evil.[p] But upon genuine reformation, the purified soul shall not be taunted with his former errors, but he shall live in the full fellowship of the spirit, and in the approbation of the judgment of Heaven.

This forgiveness does not involve the discharge of men from any moral obligation to God or man. Right is right, and wrong is wrong, by the law of God, founded in the eternal nature of things: and no dispensation from any court can make either to be the other. We cannot be absolved from any moral obligation. Indeed, there is no such obligation resting upon us, but what it would be a curse to man to be absolved from, even if he could be. But practical love to God and man is our duty now and forever. While we live in violation of it, we abide in death.[q] When we return to duty, with a true heart, we receive forgiveness of sins, the approbation of the Father, the justification of life. Then can we adopt the beloved disciple's language, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren."[r] Such, too, is the blessedness resulting from the Christian reformation, as described by the Saviour in his commission to the repentant Saul:—"For I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power

[p] *Rom.* ii. 6—16. [q] 1 John iii. 14. [r] Ib.

of satan unto God, that they may receive *forgiveness of sins*, and inheritance among them which are sanctified, by faith that is in me."[s]

In this latter sense of forgiveness, applying to the sensible enjoyment of the Divine approbation as a concomitant of the right living, is the word used by the Saviour in the following instance:—"Forgive, if ye have ought against any, that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."[t] We are not to construe this Scripture as teaching that God cherishes an unfriendly disposition towards us while we cherish an unfriendly disposition towards others. This would represent him who is the standard of perfection, as copying in his disposition after frail man, and even after *wicked, unforgiving* men. God is unchangeably good, "kind to the unthankful and the evil." Even

[s] Acts xxvi. 16—18.

[t] Matt. vi. 14, 15. Mark xi. 25, 26. See also Matt. xviii. 21—35. Some learned theological writers use this passage in support of the doctrine of endless punishment in the prison of hell. The man, they say, who was cast into prison or delivered to tormentors until he should pay his debt, could never make payment, and therefore could never get released from prison; and hence they argue, that those with whom God deals thus, (see v. 35,) will be cast into a prison from which there is no deliverance. But there is no authority either for this statement or conclusion. The object of the man in the parable, who cast his fellow-servant into prison, was, *to obtain his debt*. "He cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt." It appears hence that he expected that his fellow-servant might be able to make some arrangement to pay the debt. And the same expectation is expressed of the lord of the unforgiving servant, when he delivered him over to the tormenters, or jailers. And though such debtor *may* have died in prison before he had paid the debt, it does not follow that those to whom this parable is applied, might not fully pay what their Lord required. The debt required of them was, *to forgive their brethren*. And as the debtor in the parable was to remain in prison *until he should pay the debt*, so should they remain in the prison of death, until they should exercise a forgiving spirit. "He that loveth not his brother, abideth in death." But there is no evidence that any *will eternally continue* in an unfriendly or unforgiving spirit.

while men are sinners, God's kindness to them employs means to bring them to repentance, that they may come into the rich enjoyment of forgiveness, or freedom from the guilt of sin. But we learn from the above language of our Lord, that as long as we are in the *service* of sin, God will not grant us a freedom from its *guilt*. If we cherish an unkind and unforgiving disposition towards our fellow-creatures, we are in bondage to sin; for such a disposition is sin. And it is only by repenting or turning from sin, and exercising love which forgives our fellow-creatures, that we can experience ourselves a freedom from guilt, and enjoy the approbation of our Father in heaven.

Although the term *forgive*, in the last noticed instance, seems to apply in particular to a freedom from the *guilt* or *condemnation* of sin, yet here is likewise implied that freedom from sin itself, which we have shown to be meant, in its strict and comprehensive sense, by the phrase, *forgiveness of sins*. Nor can the Christian find any forgiveness in his own experience, but what involves a *deliverance from sin*. The freedom from guilt which the Christian enjoys, is only proportional to his freedom from the love and practice of evil. And when, as enlightened Christians, we pray to our Father, "Forgive us our sins," we do not mean to ask God to let us go on in sin, and screen us from the punishment which he has threatened on transgressors; but the sense of our prayer is, "*Free* us from our *sins*, that we may live unto thee, enjoy thine approbation, and suffer no longer that tribulation and anguish, which is upon every soul of man that doeth evil."

IV. We have now taken a general view of the doctrine of punishment as it is pronounced by the Divine

law, and administered by the Divine government; and also of the doctrine of forgiveness or remission of sins. And it appears to be a clear case, that as these two doctrines stand in the Scriptures, there is no inconsistency between them. But in addition to those evils which are regularly, and constantly executed in punishment upon sinners by the moral government of God, there are certain *special* judgments, or *external* calamities, unto which individuals and nations subject themselves by a certain course and continuance of vice. And there is a case recorded in the Old Testament, of one of these special judgments being threatened on a certain people, and their afterwards being preserved from the suffering of it. On this we will here offer a few remarks, lest it should be thought, by some readers, to be inconsistent with the views which have now been given on the subjects of punishment and forgiveness. "The word of the Lord came unto Jonah, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh, and preach unto it the preaching that I bid thee." And Jonah went, "and he cried and said, Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown." But the people repented, and the threatened punishment was not executed upon them.[u] Did not forgiveness in this case oppose the threatening of God, and clear that sinful people from the punishment which was their just desert? To give a correct view of the subject of this inquiry, it is necessary to remark, that God informed the people by his prophets, that whenever he should give them warning of any special calamity, into which their course of conduct was tending to bring them, and they, on receiving his warning, should repent, they should escape the calamity of which they were warned.[v]

[u] Jonah, chap. iii. [v] Ezek. xxxiii, 13. 16.

There could not indeed be any reasonable motive to send a messenger to forewarn sinners of an evil unto which their course of conduct was exposing them, unless it were to afford them an opportunity to avoid the threatened evil by timely repentance. Judging of the case of Nineveh by the light of this principle, by which God assured the people that he would direct his conduct in all such instances, we must understand it to be the meaning of the message which God sent to the Ninevites by Jonah, that by a continuance in their present course of iniquity *forty days*, they should become overwhelmed in destruction. But they repented, and did not continue in their wicked course the forty days longer; and so they did not suffer the threatened punishment of temporal destruction. Accordingly, the Divine forgiveness in this case did not oppose the Divine threatening, nor screen those sinners from deserved punishment. While they were sinners, they must have suffered those evils with which the regular administration of the Divine government always punishes the wicked. But they were not to be considered as having incurred, or they were not to be reckoned by the judgment of God as fully deserving, that special external calamity, until they should have continued and multiplied their transgressions to a given extent. And as their repentance prevented their continuance in iniquity, to that duration and degree on which was predicted the threatening of destruction, they were freed from the destruction, by being freed from that degree of sin which would have incurred or fully deserved it. Consequently, nothing is found in this instance of God's dealing with sinners, inconsistent with the doctrines of punishment and forgiveness as before explained.

The humble acknowledgements of Ezra and David, saying in their addresses to God, that he had not dealt with them after their sins, nor rewarded them according to their iniquities,[w] may at first strike the ear as being opposed to the universal application of the testimony of the same David, "Thou renderest to every man according to his work."[x] But we think that by a fair construction of the language referred to, such opposition will not appear. It is not pretended that mankind receive no benefits but on the ground of their merits. The recompense which God renders to every man according to his deserts, is the good or evil which men enjoy or suffer as the fruit of their moral conduct. Besides these fruits of human doings, there are blessings which God bestows upon mankind of his own munificent goodness, and not according to their works. Even in punishing the wicked according to their deserts, God designs their correction and consequent benefit; and this benevolent *design* of punishment is a good unto the sinner, which is not according to his sins, but according to the free mercy of God. And when Ezra and David offered the language above mentioned, their people had been far astray in the path of sin, and God had punished and reformed them, and bestowed upon them many blessings which they could not have claimed on the ground of merit. Being deeply affected with the view of this unmerited goodness of God, and having that view of their own ingratitude which caused David on another occasion to say, "I was as a beast before thee," under these circumstances, their saying in prayer to God, "He hath not dealt with us after our sins," &c., cannot be fairly

[w] Ez. ix. 13. Ps. ciii. 10. [x] Ps. lxii. 12.

construed as a disproof of the doctrine that men suffer, while in their sins, according to their deserts. For though they felt at such a time not only to confess the Divine goodness to be above their merits, but also to magnify the demerit of their sins as being above the punishment which they had suffered, yet we are not to take an expression of self-reproach, which one utters under a deep sense of ingratitude and shame, and employ it as if it disproved the well supported and abstract doctrine of the Bible, concerning the retributive government of God.

V. In concluding this chapter, it will be proper to say a few words on the forgiveness which it is required of us to extend to one another. How are we to forgive our fellow-creatures? Surely not by remitting all punishment. The Scriptures consider those rulers who punish evil-doers to be ministers of God, ordained of him to be a terror to evil works. "Whosoever resisteth them," saith St. Paul, "resisteth the ordinance of God."[7] But can these *ministers of God*, as the apostle calls civil rulers, be what God has appointed them to be, a terror to evil-doers, and a praise to them that do well, if they are always to clear the guilty from punishment? If we cannot fulfil the command *to forgive those who trespass against us*, without clearing them in all cases from punishment, then we are every day living in violation of the Divine requirement, by supporting our present system of civil government; for our civil government inflicts punishment on those who transgress its wholesome laws.

But we have seen that the *Divine* forgiveness is not a deliverance from *deserved punishment*, but a deliverance from the love and power of sin, and its attendant

[7] Rom. xiii. 2, 3.

condemnation. And although *we* cannot in the highest sense forgive sins, so as directly to free others from guilt, yet we can forgive the sins of others so far as it respects our own feelings and conduct towards them. We can cherish towards them that spirit of favor, which will employ such means as human agency can use, to lead those who trespass against us out of their errors, and restore them to the favor of society. We can exercise towards them that spirit of love and good will, which shall forgive the injury as far as we *can* forgive, "sending it away from" our feelings, so that it shall not put into action a spirit of revenge, to injure them because they have injured us. And this forgiveness may be exercised towards one whom we are the means of bringing to punishment. We may chain or confine a madman, in the exercise of the best of feelings towards him, when his own safety or that of the community seems to require it. Even so we may bring a transgressor to punishment, when his own good or the safety of the community seems to require it, while we harbor no unfriendly disposition towards him, but exercise that love which pities his folly, and aims to promote his welfare. This same disposition, if the punishment which we are the means of having inflicted proves salutary, or if by any other means he becomes reformed, and returns to society a good man, this same disposition will lead us to receive him to our respect, and give him a brother's hand, as if he had never transgressed. It will dismiss his sins, or blot them out of remembrance.

Here, then, is a man who has been punished and forgiven, in human society. I do not mean that he has had his *punishment* forgiven. But he has had his *punishment administered*, and his *transgressions* for-

*given.* His transgressions are blotted out of remembrance, and society receives him as a just man. And when we possess and practise the spirit here described, which scorns retaliation, and desires and seeks the good of all, we can safely and consistently pray to our Father in heaven, "Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who trespass against us."

## OBJECTION.

It has been objected, that if man is adequately punished for his sins, and that punishment is limited in its duration, he is not then saved by grace, but may demand heaven as a right. But this objection, though frequently offered, is founded upon an entire misconception of the subject. What particular right to subsequent favor does a man gain by the mere fact of his suffering for his sins? If his punishment proves a means of promoting his reformation, and obedience to the law, it in this manner operates as a favor to the punished. But it gives him no claim on the future favor of the Supreme Governor.

Suppose a child transgresses his father's law, and the father, for his correction, subjects him to punishment. The punishment proves salutary, and by this and other means the child is reformed. In a subsequent conversation with the father, the child inquires whether he received an adequate punishment for the said transgression. The father answers in the affirmative. "Then," says the child, "I demand of you, as my just desert, a valuable estate, for my inheritance." "What is your claim?" says the father. "It is the *punishment* you inflicted upon me," responds the child. Who would not regard this a singular ground for such a claim? His punishment was the just recompense

of his disobedience; but who shall say that a rich estate must be made over to him by the father, as the just recompense of his punishment? Yet this would be in character with the foregoing argument, that if the sinner is made, by the judgment of God, to receive according to his deserts, he may then claim heaven as his right.

Though punishment is, in a legal sense, according to men's deserts, yet there is something, even about this, as I have shown in this chapter, which is not according to our works. That benevolent, that fatherly *design*, for which God administers chastisement, is not according to our works, but according to his own infinite goodness. And when, by his judgments, and by the applications of his truth and love, he weans us from sin, and wins our affections to him and his law, we are overwhelmed with a sense of his favor. To think of the punishment we had suffered as entitling us to heaven, would be the most consummate weakness, madness and folly. We could only think of it with humility, as the fruit of our sins. We have nothing for the future to claim on the ground of our merits. Our hopes, full of comfort and peace, are in the grace of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. In the light and spirit of the gospel there is no boasting; for we feel that in us is being fulfilled the mission of the Son, "to give knowledge of salvation unto his people, by the remission of their sins, through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the day-spring from on high hath visited us; to give light to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."[1]

[1] Luke i. 77—79.

# CHAPTER VIII.

## THE PERSON OF CHRIST. WHO IS HE?

### SECTION I.

*An Examination, by the Light of Scripture, of Prevailing Opinions concerning Christ.*

In the sixteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, there is the record of a *confession of faith in Christ*, made by a leading apostle, which is so unambiguous, and which met with so unreserved an approval of Christ himself, that I will direct the reader's mind to it here in the outset, that in the midst of all controversies on the subject of the person of Jesus, we may have this as our polar star by which to make our course.

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias: and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

"And Simon Peter answered and said, THOU ART THE CHRIST, THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD.

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter; and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

Hence it appears that faith in Christ as the Son of

God was the true faith from heaven, and that on which he builds his church. Why, then, have many modern Christians required their brethren to believe in Christ, not as the "Son of the living God," but as the very living God himself? This they have done, and made a belief that Christ is the true essential God an indispensable article in the Christian doctrine.

I have not, in my public labors, often entered into a discussion of this particular subject. It is because I have considered the Scriptures sufficiently plain upon it without comment; and I have furthermore been in the habit of thinking, that if all Christians will believe in Christ, as the One altogether sufficient to perform the great work which the Scriptures inform us he came to do, it is of minor consequence now, whether they believe he is the very God, or One that proceeded and came forth from God. Perhaps another considerable reason for my being less engaged, and saying less in public, on this, than on most Scriptural subjects, is the circumstance that I have never experienced any trials and difficulties on it myself. When we have undergone considerable misery on account of doubts and perplexities upon any subject, and have obtained a happy deliverance from such troubles, we very naturally feel more interested for others on that subject.

But respecting the person of Christ, my mind has never been in any painful anxiety. From a child, though I was brought up among Trinitarians, and received my first religious impressions from them, the language which they used, as well as that which the Scriptures employ, in speaking of Christ, carried the impression to my mind that he is a being distinct from God, and that he derived his existence from God, is

dependent on him, and is ordained and empowered of him to be the Saviour of lost men. And as I have read the Scriptures, and the controversial writings of Trinitarians themselves, my former impressions have been confirmed.

Yet there are many learned and influential Christians, who so confidently believe that Jesus Christ is the self-existent Jehovah, and think the belief so essential to the Christian religion, that they boldly denounce all persons as infidels who do not believe it. This is surely a high charge, and ought never to be preferred by one class of professing Christians against another, without the best and most unquestionable authority. And since this charge of infidelity, upon the opinion which I have now frankly professed, comes from men of high standing in the Christian community, we will carefully examine again, to see whether the Scriptures authorize these hard speeches, which men have uttered against us.

Now if the apostles were of the opinion that Christ was the self-existent God, they would very naturally have expressed such an opinion in the case before us. For Jesus here asked them, saying, "Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?"

He has now prepared the way for a direct answer from his disciples, and an explicit statement of their opinion, if they had any decided opinion, concerning him. And we have every reason to expect that now, after having spoken of the opinions of others concerning Jesus, in answering this direct and pointed question of their Lord, "but whom say *ye* that I am?"

they will express their very highest opinion of his character,—that they will, in a simple, an unambiguous form of speech, give him as high a character as they think he sustains;—in short, that they will plainly tell him just who they think he is.

What was their answer? That they believed he was the eternal God, the self-existent Jehovah? No. "Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Hence it appears that the apostles did not believe that Jesus was the "living God," but that he was "the Christ, the Son of the living God." If any suppose that notwithstanding they called Jesus the Son of the living God, they yet believed he was the very living God himself, believing that the Son was his own Father, and the Father his own Son, they tax the disciples with that palpable absurdity of which their own words in no case prove them guilty. At this time, when they were directly asked what they thought of Jesus, and at every other time when they spoke of him, they spoke of him as a being separate from God the Father,—as much as Paul did of men in general, when he called them "the offspring of God."

If any ask whether Peter had a correct opinion of Christ when he called him the Son of the living God, the answer is, his opinion was correct, because it received the full and unreserved approbation of Christ. His reply was, "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona, (Son of Jonah,) for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven." Here we also find, that while Jesus speaks a sentence with the design to express his approval of what Peter said of him, he uses language apparently

without designing it, which ascribes to himself the same character. "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father who is in heaven."

If any can believe that, when Jesus called God his Father who is in heaven, he meant to be understood that he himself was that very Father in heaven, nothing can be too absurd for their belief. The Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation, for inconsistency, is nothing in comparison. For the doctrine of Transubstantiation only supposes that the same power which changed water into wine, changes the bread of the sacrament out of one substance into another. And this we can conceive a miracle might do. But it is impossible to conceive that a father can be his own son, and a son his own father!

In order to qualify ourselves to answer with the readiness of Peter, any who may ask us—What think ye of Christ? Who is he?—let us go back to the beginning, and examine the Scriptures along in course, which testify of him.

The first is Genesis iii. 15, where God declares that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. No one would be led to suppose, by reading this text, that the seed of the woman was the very God himself who was speaking. This Scripture implies that the seed of the woman was a person who should proceed from the woman, and should be commissioned and empowered of God to destroy the cause of evil.

Again, Gen. xxii. 18, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Paul informs us that this seed is Christ: not God, but the One whom God raised up, of the seed of Abraham, to bless the world.

Isaiah ix. 6, speaks of Christ in the highest terms,

thus?—"His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." This text has frequently been quoted in support of the opinion that Jesus Christ is God the Father. But to me this very text seems to weigh against such an opinion. Speaking of some person, it is said, "His name shall be called Wonderful," &c. Whose name shall be called Wonderful? It does not appear that the prophet was speaking of the self-existent God, for He was already known by the most important names here mentioned. He was known as the Father of all, and not only as the "Mighty God," but as the "Almighty God." The prophet certainly appears to be speaking, not of the real God, but of some other being who should be honored with high appellations. We repeat the question, Of whom does he speak?

We will read the first part of the verse. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful," —— It would seem that this is enough to satisfy any candid mind, that the prophet was not speaking of the eternal God, but of some one who was to be born a child, and to have a government or a kingdom committed to him. But to say that He, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, who fills immensity and inhabits eternity, was to be born a child, and have a government given him, is what the prophet could not have meant. The government, even the government of the universe, was in the hands of the Lord Jehovah from all eternity. Hence, the government never was nor ever could be given him. But when it was said of Christ, "the government shall be upon his shoulder," this

government was to be *given him*;—as it was said by the prophet Daniel, "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages should serve him."

Speaking of this same exaltation of Christ, and placing the government on his shoulder, Paul to the Philippians says,—"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." And again, to the Ephesians; "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom,—that ye may know what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places; far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. And hath put all things under him, and gave him to be Head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all;" and to the Corinthians he says,—"When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

Now it is utterly out of my power to believe that these Scriptures mean, that the eternal God was to be born a child, have dominion and a kingdom given him; that he was to die, be raised from the dead,

and set at his own right hand,—and when he has subdued all things under him, that then he [God] shall be subject to himself!

Had we not known that a respectable body of Christians hold to a sentiment which requires such an understanding of these Scriptures, if we had heard one attempting so to construe them, we should certainly have thought that he was designedly ridiculing the inspired writers. But as it is, we do not harbor the thought. Those who hold to the real deity of Christ, do not mean to trifle with the sacred writings, but have the impression strongly fixed upon their minds that such an opinion is essential to the christian faith. And when the inconsistencies which we have noticed are brought before them, they endeavor to satisfy themselves and others, by giving them the milder name, *mysteries*.

But to me, the idea that the high and lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, was born a child, killed, raised from the dead, and exalted at his own right hand, does not appear so much a mystery, but that it may be clearly seen to be the greatest of absurdities.

Perhaps, to avoid this difficulty, we may be told that the Godhead consists of three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; these three are one, the same in substance, equal in power and glory. And this one, who was crucified and raised from the dead, was the second person in the Trinity, God the Son. He was raised up and set at the right hand of the first person, God the Father.

But this attempt to explain away the former difficulty involves another equally as great. For if by three equal persons be meant three equal beings, each of which is God, it requires us to worship three

Gods; whereas the Scriptures allow us to worship but one.

Should it be said that the three persons are not three distinct beings, but are meant only to be expressive of different qualities, offices, or modes of action, in the same being, who is strictly one God,—and that Christ is this one God; then we are thrown entirely back into our former confusion. Yes, and more; it makes out that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are neither of them, nor all of them God, nor any other being, but only three qualities or offices of God.

Indeed, I have never seen the doctrine of the Trinity stated in any form, but that it was equally inconsistent with Reason and Revelation. If we say that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are three distinct beings, and each one is God, then we make out that there are three Gods. If we say they are only three offices or modes in which the one God acts, then we do not suppose either of them to be a proper person or being, but they are only three offices of a being. Hence, when God exalted the Son, called the second person in the Trinity, at his own right hand, it was only exalting the second office in his dominions, and making it equal with the first.

If we say that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are nothing more than three names, all applied to the one living God, then, when we read, "Unto us a child is born,"—we must suppose either, as before noticed, that the eternal God was to be born a child, or else that one of his three names was the child that should be born, and have the government placed upon its shoulder! And when God raised Christ from the dead, and set him at his own right hand, he either raised himself from the dead, and set himself at his

own right hand, or else only raised up from the dead one of his three names, and placed it at his right hand! And all these suppositions are, not as some have said, above reason, but below reason; for reason soars above them, looks down upon them, and detects their inconsistencies.

We are by no means disposed to disbelieve every thing that is mysterious. We acknowledge, in our faith, the truth of many things which we cannot fully comprehend. For instance, we believe in the existence of God, which we cannot fully comprehend. But though we cannot fully comprehend the existence of an infinite God, yet there is nothing inconsistent or unreasonable about it. We can form a clear conception of the truth that there is one self-existent, eternal God, who fills immensity, and who governs the universe.

But to say there are three persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,—that the Father by himself is the self-existent, eternal God,—and that the Son by himself is the self-existent, eternal God,—and that the Holy Ghost by itself is the self-existent, eternal God; and yet that there are not three Gods, but one God only, is to say that of which we can form no conception, only that we can clearly perceive it to be a perfect absurdity.

Or, if we say that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are not three infinite persons, but only three names of the one infinite God, though so far there is no inconsistency, otherwise than that the term son is an inappropriate name to apply to a being who can acknowledge no father, because he is self-existent and without beginning,—yet the difficulty comes to view when we attempt to reconcile this with the Scriptures.

For the Scriptures speak of God and Christ, or the Father and Son, as not two names only, but as two persons, two beings. And the apostles, if they have testified rightly, knew Christ, the Son of the living God, to be not a name merely, but a person; and this person, the Son, spoke of another person, God, as being his Father.

But when we look at Christ as properly the Son of God, and less than the Father, as he himself says, "My Father is greater than I;" when we understand that all that he is, is what God hath made him to be, and all the power and authority he has, is what God has given him,—there is no difficulty in conceiving that he was born into this world a child; that he grew in favor with God and man, and had the government placed upon his shoulder; that he was killed by wicked men, and that God hath raised him again from the dead, set him at his own right hand, and has given him a name and authority above all other created beings.

How, then, you will inquire, shall we understand the prophet when he says, "His name shall be called The Mighty God, the Everlasting Father?" To this question I reply; It is much easier to account for a created being, who is born into the world for so great a purpose as that of being the "Saviour of all men;" I say, it is much easier to account for such a person having these high names given him, than to remove those difficulties which we have seen to fall in the way of understanding the "living God" to be the "child" who should be born, and the "son" who should be given. For it is well known that the Old Testament Scriptures often give names to created beings which properly belong to God, or to some of

his attributes, on account of some part they are to act which shows forth the power and goodness of God. Thus one was called *Eladah*, which, according to Butterworth, signifies the eternity of God. Another is called *Eldaah*, the Knowledge of God. Another, *Hiel*,—Life of God. Another, *Pennel*, Face of God. And another, on account of the Divine power displayed through him, was called *Elijah*, which is God the Lord, or a strong Lord. And addressing the rulers of Israel, the Lord said, "I have said, ye are gods." It was because the word of God came to them, and they imitated him in that they ruled over men, that God applied to them his own name, and called them gods.

Is it hard, then, to account for its being said of Christ, "His name shall be called the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father,"—though he is not the self-existent God,—since God has committed into his hand the government of the moral world, and given him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow?

Harmer, an English author of the last century, in his Observations on Passages of Scripture, makes the following remarks on the phrase, "His name shall be called the Everlasting Father:" "It is common in the East to describe any quality of a person by calling him the father of the quality. Dr. Herbelot, speaking of a very eminent physician, says he performed such admirable cures, that he was surnamed the father of benedictions. The original word of this title of Christ, may be rendered, the father of that which is everlasting:—Christ, therefore, as the head and introducer of an everlasting dispensation, never to give place to another, was very naturally in the Eastern style called the Father of Eternity."

Let us read farther the testimony concerning Christ, to see whether he is not continually spoken of as a being dependent on God, and by him endowed with all his power and greatness. See Isa. xlii. "Behold my Servant whom I uphold, mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth: I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles.—I will hold thy hand and keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles." Also, Isa. liii. "He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief,—yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.—All we like sheep have gone astray; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence,—neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days; and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

Who is this servant of God whom he has promised to uphold, and to endow with his spirit, to hold by the hand and keep, and give for a covenant of the people; who was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; who died for our sins, and made his grave with the wicked and with the rich in his death? Is it the almighty God himself? Let us not so trifle with this solemn subject, and with the Scriptures, as to assert it for a moment. God would not have called himself his own servant, nor would he solemnly have promised to uphold himself, and put upon himself his holy spirit. Neither has God been put to death; nor can he ever die, and make "his grave with the wicked, and

with the rich in his death." If God were dead, who then could live?

Should it be here said, that it was not the infinite or Divine nature, but the human nature of God that suffered and died, I reply: If by the human nature be meant, not God himself, but his elect Servant, whom he has promised to uphold, and give as a covenant of the people and a light of the Gentiles, I have no objection to the idea that it was he who suffered and died, and rose again, and sits in glory at the right hand of God. But I object to the term, *human nature of God.* It is not in the law nor in the testimony. I much prefer the good Scriptural names applied to Jesus; not the human nature of God, but the Son of God, the elect Servant of God, the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

At length the fulness of times came, when the promised Child should be born, when the promised Son should be given. Previously to his being born, however, an angel from heaven said unto Joseph, who was supposed by the people to be his father, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." And immediately after his birth, an angel of the Lord came to a company of Israelitish shepherds, and addressed them, saying, "Fear not, for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you, ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

Now all this testimony shows that Christ is not God, but a precious gift of God to the children of men. For while Christ was a babe in the manger, God was enthroned in heaven, and sent his angels down to men.

to proclaim the Saviour's birth. Yes, God then filled immensity, and was superintending the affairs of the universe.

But of the child Jesus it is said that he "grew and waxed strong in the spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him." At length he came to John the Baptist to be baptized with his baptism. "And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water, and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him. And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

By whom were the heavens opened unto Jesus? and from whom did he see the spirit descending? Who was it that spoke from heaven, "Lo, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased?" Was it Jesus Christ himself? Was he the very God who spoke from heaven at that time? and did he declare himself to be his own Son? Can it be that there are any Christians who will call us infidels for believing that Jesus Christ was not the very God who spoke from heaven; when the voice said of this same Jesus, "Lo, this is my beloved Son?" If so, then so it must be. For we must still believe that He who spoke from heaven was not Jesus himself, but another being, and the One who sent Christ into the world.

If any ask us, Who do ye say that Jesus is? we must answer with Peter, "He is *the Christ, the Son of the living God.*" And though men may condemn us, Jesus himself will say, "Blessed are ye; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto you, but my Father who is in heaven;—and upon this rock will I build

my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

## SECTION II.

### *A more particular view of the New Testament Teachings of the Person of Christ.*

In the preceding section, after remarking on the importance which some Christians have attached to the doctrine of Christ's proper Deity, we entered into a comparison of such doctrine with its own parts, and into an examination of the Scriptures which testify of him. We found the doctrine of the Trinity, in every form in which its advocates have stated it, to be both incongruous in itself, and utterly inconsistent with the Divine testimony.

Taking as our motto the divinely commended profession of Peter, "Thou art the Son of the living God," we attended chiefly to the Old Testament Scriptures, to the prophecies concerning Christ. But we came into the New Testament so far as to notice the proclamation of Jesus' birth, and the history of his baptism by John, when "the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him;—and, lo, a voice from heaven, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." We left the subject by remarking that, if there are any who will call us infidels for not believing that Jesus was the very God who spake from heaven at that time, so they may call us; for we must still believe that He who then spoke from heaven was not Jesus himself, but another Being, and the One who sent Jesus into the world.

As we read on in the New Testament, we find in every chapter more or less evidence that Jesus is a

being distinct from God, that he is dependent on God, receiving all his power and authority from him. In all his instructions to the people he spake to them of their Father and his Father in heaven. He says, "My Father is greater than I." "I am not come of myself; —for he [the Father] sent me." "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me." "The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do." He gave thanks to God, and prayed to him. "At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." At the grave of Lazarus, when he performed one of the most wonderful of his miracles, he thanked God that he had heard his prayer, and given him such an opportunity to prove to the people the divinity of his mission. "And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. And I know that thou hearest me always: but because of the people that stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me."

At another time, when he had sent his disciples on board of a ship, and dismissed the multitudes, "he went apart into a mountain to pray; and when the evening was come, he was there alone." And when he was in the agonies of death on the cross, when God, as it appears, suffered his mind to sink for a moment, that he might know how to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, "Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

What an affecting scene! Go and visit the lovely child—

> "A manger's his cradle, a stall his abode,
> The oxen are near him, and gaze on the babe."

See him when he has gone about his Father's work. "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." He "hath not where to lay his head." But in all his works he breathes the love of heaven. See him weeping with the afflicted. See him calling poor sinners around him, to feed them with the words of everlasting life. "The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them." He is the Friend of man, sent of God, to be the Light, the Life, and the Saviour of the world.

And now, lo, he is seized by a band of ruffians, dragged to a mock trial, hastily adjudged to a shameful and painful death, crowned with thorns; those hands which had ever been employed in works of love to men, and those feet which had always trodden the paths of virtue, are pierced with the cold iron, and nailed fast to the rugged wood. His friends all forsake him; his enemies revile him, and sport with his miseries; his mind begins to sink, and he exclaims, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

On the ground that this Jesus was a created being, dependent on God, and ordained of him to be the Saviour of the world, all this view which we have now taken of him, from the Scriptures, appears an affecting reality. But to suppose that he, whom we

have just viewed upon the cross, and heard exclaim, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" was the very self-existent God himself, would change the whole scene into a farce. For to represent God as crying aloud in distress, and asking why he had forsaken himself, is to represent that which never has been, nor ever can be a reality. And further, when Jesus was about to expire, he said, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit."

Indeed, Jesus, in all his conversation with both friends and enemies, never once professed to be the self-existent God, nor did he ever drop a word that appears to have been designed to intimate such an idea.

It is recorded in the 10th of John, that Jesus said at a certain time to the Jews, "I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shown you from my Father; for which of these works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because thou, being man, makest thyself God." Hence it appears that the Jews, enemies of Jesus, accused him with making himself God, because he said, "I and my Father are one."

But we will not leave this without looking further, to see whether Jesus made any answer, and what answer he made to this accusation. For perhaps they falsely accused him. We know that they frequently misunderstood him, and were always disposed to put the most unfavorable construction on what he said. It was but a short time before this that they charged him with having a devil, for saying, "If any man keep my saying, he shall never

see death." "Now," said the Jews, "we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, if a man keep my saying he shall never taste of death." Here the Jews condemned Jesus for his words without understanding them. They supposed him to mean, that his disciples should not see natural death. Whereas he had reference to the death of carnal-mindedness and unbelief, which a man never suffers when he keeps the saying of Christ, which is spiritual life.

So it is very likely they falsely accused Jesus, when they charged him with making himself God. To their settled enmity towards Jesus, add their jealousy of impostors, who were often rising up in the nations around them, and pretending to be gods, and we need not wonder that they fancied they saw such pretensions in Jesus, when there was no ground for their suspicion.

I say, impostors were often rising up in the idolatrous nations around, pretending to be gods: and the people were duped by them, so that in their worship they would deify those impostors, and adore them as the true Divinity. When Caius, not far from our Saviour's time on earth, attempted to force the Jews to set up his statue in their temple, and to do as his other subjects, who received him as they received the gods, and sware by his name, they chose to die rather than to do this thing. For their Scriptures taught them to worship none as God but the invisible Jehovah. Though they looked for the Messiah of whom the prophets spake, yet they did not expect him to be the infinite God, but the Servant of God, the Elect of God, the Saviour of Israel.

Let us see now what answer Jesus, the Messiah of

whom the prophets spake, gave to the Jews, when they charged him with making himself God. If he really meant to claim supreme Divinity, he would of course refer them to some Scripture, if there were any such, which would clearly show that the predicted Messiah was to be the very invisible God.

His answer, however, is this;—"Is it not written in your law, I said, ye are gods? If he called them gods unto whom the word of God came, and the Scriptures cannot be broken, say ye of him whom the Father hath sanctified, and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?"

Here Jesus refers his accusers to the portion of their Scriptures which we quoted in the preceding section. Who were they that were called gods? They were the rulers of Israel. Why were they called gods? Because the word of God came to them; or God, in some measure, displayed his power and goodness to the people through their instrumentality.

What! did Christ refer his opposers to a case where men were *called* gods, to show them that it was proper for him to make himself the essential God? No; for the circumstance that men were called gods to whom the word of God came, could have no bearing upon the question of Christ's being the real God. But he referred to this Scripture to show his opposers that their charging him with blasphemy, and with making himself God, was rash, and unjust: for though he professed to be the one "whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world," yet he had never applied to himself so great a name as their Scriptures applied to their ancient rulers. For they were called *gods*, and he had only professed to be the *Son* of God.

I should think that this answer of Christ to the

Jews would be satisfactory proof to any candid mind who will examine it, that Jesus meant to disclaim any pretension to being the self-existent God. He says, to be sure, that he and his Father are one. And he also prays to his Father, that all believers on him may be one in them, even as they are one.[a] Not that they may all be one person, nor all be gods; but that, as the Father and Son are one in spirit and purpose, so in this sense believers may all be one in them; being co-workers together with the spirit of grace and truth.

But the first part of the first chapter of John's gospel is quoted with great confidence, as proof of the proper Deity of Christ. "In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God." But even this passage stands rather as a *disproof* of such sentiment. I think that any unprejudiced mind, on reading this passage, must be struck with the impression that the *Word* here spoken of is something distinct from God, as it is said to be *with* God. To say of the self-existent Deity, that he was in the beginning *with God*, would be a senseless expression.

Christ is, by a metonymy of speech, called the Word of God, because the word or counsel of God is revealed through him. This counsel was with God in the beginning of his works, and is now manifested unto us through Jesus Christ, who was sent in the flesh to dwell among men, and show forth the word of life in the most familiar and exemplary manner.

Hence it is said at verse 14th, "And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." And it is by the same metonymy of speech that it is said, "And the word was God," as is employed in the saying that

[a] John xvii. 20, 21.

"Christ is the power of God, and the wisdom of God."[b] Christ is the *wisdom of God;* i. e. the wisdom of God is wonderfully displayed through him. Christ is the *power of God;* i. e. the Divine power is strikingly manifested in him. And the word was God; i. e. the word, Christ, was a manifestation of God himself, in the fulness of his moral perfections. As we have just seen, *they were called gods to whom the word of God came.*

But the 3d verse has likewise been brought forward in proof of Christ's being very God. "All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made." But if even the word rendered *made* in this place signified to *create*, it would not make out but Christ was, as many hold, a subordinate being, unto whom God gave creative power. The original word, however, which is rendered *made*, in this case, and which occurs *fifty-three* times in this Gospel of John, signifies *to be*, *to come*, *to become*, *to come to pass:* also, *to be done* or *transacted;*[c] as in

[b] 1 Cor. i. 24.

[c] See note to London Im. Version, in loco. To make this definition of *egeneto* obvious to the common reader, I will here refer him to every instance of its occurrence in St. John's Gospel. Besides the third verse above remarked upon, it occurs in the following places:—i. 6, and is rendered *was;* "There *was* a man sent from God." i. 10, and is rendered *made;* "He was in the world, and the world *was made* by him." The Improved Version renders it *enlightened;* and *Cappe* translates it, "The world was *made for* him;" understanding by the world the Jewish dispensation, as in Gal. iv. 3; Col. ii. 8, 20. Again, i. 12, it is rendered, *to become;* "To them gave he power *to become* the sons of God." i. 14, it is rendered *was made;* "The Word *was made* flesh:" i. e. it *was*, or it *became* flesh. i. 15, it is rendered *is;* "He *is* before me." i. 17, *came;* "But grace and truth *came* by Jesus Christ." i. 28, *were done;* "These things *were done* in Bethabara." ii. 1, it stands for *was;* "There *was* a marriage in Cana." ii. 9, it is *was* again; "And knew not whence it *was*." iii. 9, *be;* "How can these things *be?*" iii. 25, *arose;* "Then there *arose* a question." iv. 14, *shall be;* "The water that I shall give him *shall be* in him," &c. v. 4, *was made;* "Whosoever

chap. xv. 7, where the same word in the future tense is rendered *shall be done*. "If ye abide in me, and I in you, ye shall ask what you will, and it *shall be done* unto you." And so in this place, the sense appears to be, that "All things (i. e. all things in the Christian dispensation) were *done* by him," or by his authority. Accordingly, St. Paul said, "I can do all things (meaning all things appertaining to his sphere of action in the gospel ministry) through Christ that strengtheneth me."

The same sentiment which John expresses in the beginning of his gospel, he brings to view also in the commencement of his first epistle, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon,

then first stepped in, *was made* whole." The same in verses 6, 9, 14. But in verse 14, it occurs a second time, for *come*, or *happen*; "Lest a worse thing *come* unto thee." vi. 16, *was come*; "And when even *was* now *come*." vi. 17, *was*; "And it *was* now dark." vi. 19, *were*; "And they *were* afraid." vi. 21, *was*; "And immediately the ship *was* at the land." vi. 25, *camest*; "Rabbi, when *camest* thou hither?" vii. 43, *was*; "So there *was* a division among the people." viii. 33, *be made*, i. e. *become*; "How sayest thou then, Ye shall *be made* free?" viii. 58, *was*; "Before Abraham *was*." ix. 22, *should be*; "He *should be* put out of the synagogue." ix. 27, *be*; "Will ye also *be* his disciples?" ix. 39, *be made*; "Might *be made* blind." x. 16, *be*; "And there shall *be* one fold." x. 19, *was*; "And there *was* a division." The same at verse 22; "And it *was* at Jerusalem." In xii. 29, it is not separately translated, but stands in the phrase translated, "*it thundered*," i. e. it *did* thunder. In the next, the 30th verse, it is used for *came*; "This voice *came* not for my sake." xii. 36, *be*; "That ye may *be* sons of light." xii. 42, it is, *should be*. xiii. 2, *being*; "Supper *being* ended." At verse 19th, it is twice rendered *come to pass*. xiv. 22, *is*; "Lord, how *is* it?" xiv. 29, *came to pass*, repeated. xv. 7, *be done*; "It *shall be done* unto thee." In the next verse it is rendered, *will be*. xvi. 20, *shall be*; "Your sorrow *shall be* turned into joy." xix. 36, *were done*; "For these things *were done*." xx. 27, *be*; "*Be* not faithless." xxi. 4, *was come*; "But when the morning *was now come*." These are all the cases of the use of *ΓΙΝΟΜΑΙ*, or *εγενετο*, in St. John's Gospel. And the reader cannot fail to see, from the evangelist's use of the word, that its meaning is correctly defined above. The same is its general usage. It bears not the sense of *create*.

and our hands have handled of the word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that *aionion* life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you."

But it has been thought by some that the *miracles* of Christ prove him to be God; for he did those works which none but God could do.

To this we reply, so did Moses and Elijah do works which none but Divine power could perform. Yet none ever thought of arguing from this that they were gods. God wrought miracles by them. So of Christ. Peter, in addressing the Jews concerning him, said, "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know; Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.—This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye do now see and hear. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."[d]

From this we discover that the miracles of Christ were wrought indeed by the power of God, because God imparted of his Divine power to him. And here also the truth is confirmed of what we have before learned, that though Jesus is to be honored as Lord

[d] Acts ii. 22, 33—36.

and Christ, it is because the Father hath *made* him to be both Lord and Christ.

Another circumstance which has been adduced in proof of the proper Deity of Christ, is that of his being a proper object of worship. It is said, "Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Now as the Scriptures allow us to worship none but God, if it can be shown that they justify the worship of Christ, it has been thought to prove that he is God. And that the Scriptures do justify the worship of Christ, is thought to be proved from texts like these; Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11; "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,—and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Rev. v. 13; "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb, forever and ever."

But here, though it is proved that every knee shall bow at the name of Jesus, and every tongue ascribe blessing, and honor, and glory, and power to God and the Lamb, yet this does not show that the Lamb is to be worshipped as God. It only shows that all proper honor is to be given him, as the "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;" as the exalted "Prince and Saviour," the "Head of every man."

To *worship*, simply signifies, to respect, to honor, to reverence. And respect is to be shown to every one who fills any important station above us, according to his grade and merit. "It is written, Thou shalt wor-

ship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou *serve*.' Does this mean that servants shall not *serve* their masters, children their parents, nor subjects their rulers? No. It simply means that we are to worship and serve the Lord only, as God. Nor are we to serve others in any sense, whose service will require us to transgress the law of God. But we are to pay proper respect to all who are appointed of God to fill necessary stations above us; and even in doing this, we are honoring and serving God, because he requires it of us.

So when we ascribe blessing and honor to the Lamb, and adore Jesus above all beings in the universe, (excepting Him only who hath exalted him, and put all things under him,) by so doing we honor God. Because it was for this purpose that God exalted Jesus, and gave him a name which is above every name;—it was that men should honor him, that every knee should bow to him. Accordingly, when we "confess that Jesus Christ is Lord," it is "to the glory of God the Father;" because he hath raised up Jesus, "and made him both Lord and Christ."

There are some other arguments which are brought up to prove the Deity of Christ, which we do not deem it important to consider in this place. But after all controversy on the subject, it stands a solemn truth, that, "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself as a ransom for all, to be testified in due time."*

Does any one ask if we deny the divinity of Christ? I answer, No. We deny no divinity which the Scriptures ascribe to him. We honor him as a divine person, because God has, to an extraordinary degree,

* 1 Tim. 5, 6.

communicated to him of his Divine perfections. We honor him as the Son of God, in a sense in which no other being in the universe is his Son. We believe in him as the one who possesses a power from God which no other prophet ever possessed; a power to look into time, past and to come, not like the prophets, who had things made known to them by signs and visions, but intuitively; that he could see intuitively the events of futurity, and that he can see the mind of the whole human family, and know their wants.

When Jesus described to his disciples the events that were to come in the end of that age, he spake not like the prophets, who only repeated what God had spoken to them in some vision; but he spake as of things which he saw, as an eye-witness would see them as they transpired. Not that his knowledge is as infinite as the knowledge of God, for he spoke of one event the time of which he did not know. None knew it but the Father. But he had all knowledge given him which was necessary for his carrying on the work of his great and important mission. And what knowledge is imparted to him, is like the knowledge of God, intuitive. That is, he can see things which have been, which are, and which are to be, immediately by the mind, or by perception, without the use of those means through which others must gain their knowledge. Hence, when Jesus was beyond Jordan, he saw that Lazarus, in Bethany, was dead. He could see the thoughts of his enemies; and he knew that his disciples had been disputing, when they were on their way to Capernaum. It is truly a pleasing reflection, that while we have a High Priest above who knows how to be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, he

also sees our condition, and knows what our infirmities are; and that he knows how to apply such means, and at the best time too, as shall heal our infirmities.

If you ask whether I do not weaken the ground of hope in the accomplishment of the wonderful work of love, by holding Christ to be a dependent being, I answer, no. For God, on whom he is dependent, has spoken it, and it shall be done. Thus saith Jehovah, who cannot lie: "Behold my Servant whom I uphold; mine Elect in whom my soul delighteth. * * He shall not fail nor be discouraged."[f] "The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; and he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied."[g] The work is as sure to be accomplished, then, as God is true.

Hence, though we believe in Christ, not as God, but as the "Son of the living God," we ascribe to him a higher character, and make him a more effectual and extensive Saviour, than most of those who call him God. Yes, when our opponents charge us with dishonoring Jesus, let it be told them, we honor him as the efficient Saviour of the world; but ye do not. And we honor Jesus by acknowledging his existence; but ye, in effect, deny his existence. And can it be honoring Jesus to deny his very being?

We, while we believe in God, believe also in Christ. But ye deny the existence of Jesus Christ, that one Mediator between God and man; for ye say there is no Christ but God. Thus you would take away the lovely Jesus, for whose birth so many saints and angels have sung praise to God. But our faith delights to cling to his existence. We admire the Divine

[f] Isa. xlii. 1. [g] Isa. liii. 11.

plan of a Mediator between God and men, who, under God, shall be our Head, our Leader, forever.

Finally, brethren, however men may reproach us for it, let us be satisfied to believe in Christ as "the Son of the living God." On this rock, i. e. on this faith, Christ declares he will build his church, and the gates of hell (hades, the grave) shall not prevail against it.

Now gates are places of entry. By the gates of hades, the grave, Jesus evidently meant those tribulations and persecutions from the hands of wicked men, which were as gates or entries into the grave. These shall not prevail against that faith which is built on Christ as the Son of God.

Now in this country there are not these same causes to annoy us. Still there are gates of hades. Sickness and death will bring us to the grave. But shall these prevail against our faith in the Son of God, who is our Resurrection and our Life,—and by whom the Lord God hath promised to destroy death, and wipe away tears from off all faces? O, may our faith in this mighty Saviour be strong and unmoved, and so our hope in immortality shall remain bright and clear. How exceedingly precious is this hope? How valuable above all things on earth. With this hope we are rich; without it, we are poor indeed. Christian, when you see the devastations of sickness and death among your friends and neighbors, and realize that you too must be brought to death, to the house appointed for all living,—for what would you exchange the hope that Heaven's immortal spring shall come, death be swallowed up in the victory of life, and tears be wiped away from off all faces? This hope,

this priceless hope is yours, through a living faith in the SON OF GOD.

## SECTION III.

### *Christ the Image of God; and Exalted in his Glory.*

So rich and sublime are the sentiments involved in the person and character of Christ, that we must give to the subject another section in this elementary book. The points of view in which I wish further to present him to the reader, are comprised in the following language of St. Paul, (Heb. i. 3:) "*Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.*"

In these few words of inspiration, which I will call the *text* of this section of my work, we have a summary of what constitutes the excellence, the trustworthiness, the loveliness and glory of the blessed Saviour. The passage relates to the moral character, the priestly office, the divine authority, the glorious exaltation and final triumph of the Son of God.

I. The first view which is here given us of Jesus Christ, is that of his being *the Brightness of the Father's glory, and the express Image of his person.*

We do not learn hence that Jesus Christ *is* the eternal Father,—though this is another of the texts which have been applied to such a sentiment. And here I will add a few remarks to what was said in the beginning of this chapter, touching the importance of this controversy. I said that I had not been in the habit of often discussing the question of Trinity and Unity, because I had not attached to it, or to the con-

troversy upon it, so much importance as is attached to it by many. It is important in its place, but not of *capital* importance. Some have placed the question of Trinity and Unity first of all, and reckoned the moral character and purposes of God a matter of minor importance. They can discuss from week to week, and from year to year, the question whether God exists in one person, or in three persons, or in three natures, or something of the kind united in one,—but if you invite their attention to the question of the moral character of God, his disposition towards his children, and the design and final results of his government over them, they are soon impatient,—it is a matter to them of smaller moment.

But to my mind and feelings the matter of greatest concern is the grand gospel theme, the wisdom, and love, and grace, and salvation of God. If I believed that the creation and government of God shall result in a boundless scene of wretchedness to his moral creatures, it would be of little consolation to me to determine whether there were three persons, or one, in the Godhead which had planned and prosecuted the system so fraught with disaster and ruin. It would seem an occasion of regret that creation was ever begun, and man called from nonentity,—equally so whether it were the work of a triune God, or of a single undivided person.

Yet, as I have said, the question of Trinity and Unity is important in its place. It is important that men should have clear and rational conceptions of the unity, as well as wisdom and goodness, of the Being they worship. And the habit of bowing the mind to the reception of absurdities for truth, is hurtful to the

mind, as to its activeness in the discrimination and enjoyment of truth.

But I suppose that the real opinions of different Christians on this subject, are nearer alike than their creeds and forms of profession. It has been my belief, ever since I have thought upon this subject, that all Christians are, in reality, *unitarian* on this point of doctrine. I do not mean that those of the opposite sects are hypocritical in their profession. They assent to the doctrine of the Trinity, not pretending to understand how it can be so, but supposing that so the Scriptures teach, and that so it must be. They do not mean to deceive, but they are themselves confused. There is a sentiment in their souls which these contrary professions can never obliterate. They may assent to the Catholic profession of faith, "The Father by himself is God, the Son by himself is God, and the Holy Ghost by himself is God;—yet there are not three Gods, but one God;"—they may assent to this, I say, supposing it must be so. But they can never take into their understandings, and carry in their hearts, so absurd a proposition. I repeat here, I would not have it understood that we are never to believe what is mysterious. There may be a proposition that is consistent, and established by abundant evidence as true, which we may understandingly believe, though we do not comprehend every circumstance about it. We cannot comprehend the being of God. But the truth that there is a God, the great first Cause, of infinite wisdom and power, is reasonable, consistent, and abundantly evident. But to say there are three distinct persons, each of whom is by himself God, and yet that there are not three Gods, but one God, is stating what is not so much of a mystery, but that we see it to be

absurd, in so much that we cannot understandingly and practically believe it.

Therefore I conclude, as I said before, that all Christians are *unitarian* in their *practical* sentiments and *feelings* on this point of doctrine. When they think of God, they think of him as the eternal, self-existent, all-pervading Spirit, the first Cause, the sole Creator, and supreme Governor of all things. When they think of Jesus Christ, they think of him as a being having an existence separate from God, which he derived from God as his Son,—and being commissioned and sent from God, to act as his servant in the prosecution of an important enterprise. When they pray God to send his *holy spirit* into their hearts, they conceive of this divine spirit as the energy of God, the spiritual influence upon their hearts of his presence and power. And the rest of the Trinity is in name only, in subtle disputation.

But there is an interesting sentiment conveyed in the apostle's saying, that Christ is *the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person.* Or, as other translators have rendered it, "he is a ray of his brightness, and an image of his perfections." A ray of his brightness. That is, Jesus Christ came unto mankind in the spirit, the disposition, the moral nature of God. In the expressions of his feelings and affections through the glow of his heavenly countenance, through his words and through his benevolent acts, he brings to our sight, and to our feelings, the moral affections of God towards us, as the ray of light from the sun brings to our vision the form and glory of that luminous source of day.

Did Jesus love the world? Did he sympathize with the distressed and afflicted, lead sinners home to virtue

and peace, and overcome evil with good? Did he manifest a deep interest for the well-being of mankind, an interest for them which no circumstance of theirs, not even their hatred to him, could diminish,—and which even death itself, inflicted by them without a cause, could not overcome? By dying for sinners, giving himself a ransom for all, tasting death for every man, did he thus prove the infallibility of his love, that it can never be forced to break its hold, that it is stronger than all opposition, and will never cease to pursue the good of mankind? In all these amiable moral traits of Jesus' character, we see the moral disposition of God, our Creator. Here we have the moral image of the Divine perfections, a ray of the Divine brightness. Think, ye ungrateful and sinful;—think, ye unreconciled and doubtful,—that He who made the world and all things in it, who upholds and governs the universe, at whose command are the storms and tempests, life and death, and time and eternity,—He is your friend. Look into the life, and the death,—into the kind affections of Jesus, into that love of his which never faileth, and you see the image of God's love to you. Away with your doubts; away with your ingratitude and your fears; your Friend is almighty, the Almighty is your friend:—who, then, can inflict upon you ultimate harm? Give him your hearts, and be at peace. "We pray you, in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God."

Again, Jesus Christ is the image of God, specially and singularly so, in another important sense. "*He is the power* of God and the *wisdom* of God."[b] That is, God has imparted unto him of his own wisdom and power, to be possessed and used by him, not only

[b] 1 Cor. i. 24.

in a greater degree, but in a different manner, from what divine wisdom and power have been possessed and used by any other created being.

This view of Christ as the *Image* of God, is the same as that which we touched upon in the preceding section, under the idea of his *Sonship*. We showed that he was the Son of God in a special sense, bearing peculiar resemblances to the Father. Under this head, CHRIST THE IMAGE OF GOD, we will pursue those peculiar and interesting resemblances farther. And in this enlargement upon the subject, I will repeat nothing said before, only insomuch as may be required for a good understanding of the whole.

God, at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake unto the fathers by the prophets. And by some of them he wrought miracles. But he did not give them to possess any different kind of faculties, or different kind of powers, to be their own, than was possessed by others. When Moses communicated to the people the revelations of God which he had received, it did not imply any superior wisdom or higher mental faculties of his own,—any more than your handing to one of your children a message for a neighbor, and his conveying it, implies superior wisdom, or different faculties in him, from the rest of your children. God sent his angel, and communicated verbally to Moses those things which he was to communicate to the people; and he placed upon record, and preached unto the people, those things which God spake unto him. And the *prophets* were taught in *visions* the things which they were to proclaim to the people. In some instances the angel of God in the vision would explain to them the meaning of the message which they were to carry to the people; but generally they were

left, as others, to exercise their own natural judgment upon the meaning of their message. They went unto the people with a "thus saith the Lord," and communicated what the Lord, speaking unto them in vision, had instructed them to say. But they said it not of any superior wisdom of their own. The prophet Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar, "But as for me, this secret is not revealed to me, for any wisdom that I have more than any living. * * The great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter." And when *miracles* were wrought at the instance of *Moses*, it was not by the direct putting forth of power by Moses, power which God had given him to be by him exerted at his pleasure. In these cases God accompanied the motions of Moses, at particular and previously specified times and occasions, with the execution of these wonderful works. Moses felt no consciousness that he possessed a power, which God had given him to be used at pleasure, to work miracles. He had to obtain several signs from the Lord, in order to satisfy himself that God would be with him to sustain him, in the encounters which he was directed to make with the authorities of Egypt.

But Jesus wrought miracles by the exercise of power which he possessed as his own, to be used at pleasure. When I say that he possessed this power as his own, I do not mean that he was independent of God. He everywhere acknowledged his dependence upon God, as the source whence he derived all the powers he possessed. But this superhuman, this divine power of miracles, God gave to him to be his, as the natural powers which he has given us are ours. When we go about our ordinary work, though we are sensible that it is in God that we live, and move, and

have our being, yet we expect to perform our work by the use of powers which God has given us as a part of ourselves, to be used by us at pleasure. So Jesus had the power of miracles. It was his own by the gift of God, to be used whenever he should choose to use it, in the purposes of his gospel mission. He was not to use it for other purposes. When he was tempted to turn stones into bread to satisfy his own hunger, he refused to do it, because it would not be consistent with the design for which he possessed this divine ability. For his own subsistence he was to be an example for others, relying on the ordinary providence of God. His divine power was not to be used for purposes of his own temporal advantage. But in the work of his mission he had it for use whenever he wanted to employ it. This sentiment is expressed in the word which John testified of Jesus, saying, (John iii. 34,) "For God giveth not the spirit by measure unto him." That is, as Farmer justly remarks, God gave him the spirit of power for universal and perpetual use, and not for a limited time and season.

And so with regard to the *wisdom* of Christ, his knowledge of truth, and of things past, present, and to come, so far as it was requisite for the purposes of his high commission;—this knowledge he possessed as a part of his own understanding. He knew the minds and thoughts of others. When his disciples had been disputing on the way to Capernaum, who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven, he, though distant from them, knew their conversation. When he was at a distance beyond Jordan, he knew the time when Lazarus, of Bethany, expired. He had a mental discernment, unlike that of any other prophet, by which he could see these things. And

when he foretold things that should come to pass in the future, he described them, not as the prophets who related visions, but as perceiving them with his mind; as looking into futurity by an intuitive discernment. As far as God saw fit to give him knowledge, it was knowledge like his own, a direct and immediate discernment of things that were, and were to be.

Now in these respects, in respect to the kind, degree, and manner, of the power and wisdom of Christ, as well as in his moral character, he is in a special sense, in a sense unknown in any other man, *the express image of God.*

The same view applies to Jesus in his capacity as the *Life* of the world. He says of himself, (John v. 26,) "For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself." He has in himself the power of life, the power to communicate life. He communicates moral life to the soul; and the energies of his life, which roused the sleeping Lazarus from death, shall make the dead to live, until in him shall all be made alive.

2. The second capacity in which Christ is presented in the text, is that of his ruling authority, expressed by the words, "*Upholding all things by the word of his power.*" Some render it "*governing* all things by the word of his power." The phrase *all things* is variously limited to different classes of things, according to the different subjects to which it is applied. When Paul says to the Corinthians, "Let *all things* be done to edifying," he means all the services of public worship. When he says, "I can do *all things* through Christ that strengtheneth me," he means all things appertaining to the apostolic office. And here, Christ's upholding or governing all things

by the word of his power, is his controlling and directing all incidents and concerns which appertain to the work of his mission, as the Messiah, the Saviour and moral Ruler of the world.

The sentiment is similar in the words preceding the text, "God hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things; by whom also he hath made the worlds." The word here rendered *worlds* is not *kosmos*, which is used for the material world, and never occurs in the Scriptures in the plural number; but it is *aionos*, the *ages*. God has given to Christ dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all nations, and kindreds and languages should serve him; and he has for him constituted the ages or periodical dispensations, which are requisite for the accomplishment of this purpose. And all things appertaining to this divinely glorious work, does Christ sustain and govern by the word of his power.

3. The third particular in the text concerning Jesus is, that "he by himself purged our sins." I shall not have space to dwell on this particular at present, farther than to remark, that it conveys allusion to the blood of sprinkling under the law, which, in a legal point of view, sanctified to the purifying of the flesh. But the blood of Christ is represented as *cleansing from sin*. That is, the *love* of Christ, the *cause* of Christ, which was sealed and attested by his blood, cleanses from sin. Hence the apostle here speaks of his purging our sins when he spilt his blood for us on the cross, because he then sealed and confirmed that covenant of love, that system of grace, which shall "take away the sin of the world."

4. In the fourth place our text describes the final

exaltation of Christ, by his sitting down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding (or governing) all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

This describes the divine authority and power in which God has set his Son, whom he "has raised from the dead, and made to be both Lord and Christ." In this authority he must reign, until all are subdued unto him, united to him in love.[1] And then, though he will be subject to him, who put all things under him, yet he will ever be, as he is constituted of God, the Head of every man, the Medium of communication between us and the Father, the local and visible personification of God unto us.

It is precious, it is interesting to the soul, to contemplate Jesus in this high and exalted capacity; related to us as a brother, and thus coming nigh unto us in familiar intercourse,—and related to God also in a higher sense than we, being the brightness of his glory, and image of his person. We may expect to be able, in our immortal, spiritual existence, to perceive the Divine Being, and feel his presence, more clearly and sensibly than we do here; yet he is an all-pervading Spirit, filling immensity; and his Christ will be unto us his visible habitation, his mouth of communication forever.

The sun is a vast body, a million times larger than the earth, and ninety-six millions of miles from us. Yet there is a medium through which the rays of light from all parts of that great body are converged into

[1] 1 Cor. xv. 24—28.

the narrow pupil of our eye, and we perceive its whole magnitude and its glories. So has God constituted Jesus the wonderful medium of his own light and glory,—so that we shall see, and know, and enjoy the Father in him, insomuch that there will seem, to use the language of our apostle, "to dwell in him all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

If there are other planetary worlds of intelligent beings, we may reason from analogy that the one God and Father of all, has constituted for them, each race or world of them, a Head, to be the medium of his presence and his communion with them, as he has constituted Christ for us. But this is not a matter of revelation. God's revelation to us relates to the interests of our own mortal, yet purposed to be *immortal* race.

In the light and spirit of this revelation we will live and rejoice. In our conscious weakness, we love to remember "that we have a High Priest above," who "knows what is in man," and "who knows how to be touched with the feelings of our infirmities;"—that we have a Prince and Saviour in so high exaltation, who sees and knows the wants of our souls,—and who will ever be unto us, in wisdom, power and love, a Ray of the Father's brightness, and the Image of his perfections.

# CHAPTER IX.

## THE MISSION OF CHRIST.

### SECTION I.

*Erroneous Views Examined.—Christ suffered not infinite Wrath as a Substitute for Man.*

I. BEFORE the introduction of the Messiah into the world, it was appointed that his name should be called JESUS, which is, being interpreted, SAVIOUR. This name was given him to denote the object of his mission, the purpose of his coming, which is to redeem and save makind. To save them from what? This is an important inquiry, and the consideration of it is rendered doubly important, if possible, on account of the misunderstanding of it which has obtained, and has dishonored the gospel.

It is the common sentiment on this question, that the grand object of Jesus' mission is to save mankind from suffering a penalty or punishment which they have incurred by breaking the law of God. This penalty is said to be endless death or misery. It has been customary for pious clergymen to assert that they themselves deserve endless misery for their very best performances. Accordingly, if they should receive that punishment which strict justice requires, eternal woe must be their doom.

The following is the sentiment of Dr. Watts on the penalty of the broken law:—

"Far in the deep, where darkness dwells,
The land of horror and despair,

Justice has built a dismal hell,
And laid her stores of vengeance there.

"Eternal plagues and heavy chains,
Tormenting racks and fiery coals,
And darts t' inflict immortal pains,
Dipped in the blood of damned souls."

In speaking of the execution of this penalty, the same learned divine uses the following language:—

"His nostrils breathe out fiery streams,
And from his awful tongue,
A sovereign voice divides the flame,
And thunders roll along.

"Tempests of angry fire shall roll
To blast the rebel worm,
And beat upon his naked soul
In an eternal storm."

The assembly of Westminster divines have declared the punishment which mankind incur by sin to be "All the pains and miseries of this life, death itself, and the pains of hell forever."

But it is not the pains and miseries of this life, and death itself, which Jesus came to save men from suffering, but *the pains of hell forever;* or as Watts calls it, *immortal pains, an eternal storm of angry fire beating upon the naked soul.* This is the punishment which Jesus undertook to save men from suffering. How does he save them from it? By keeping them from deserving it, or from exposing themselves to it? No; for they have deserved it already, and justice requires that they shall suffer it. So the work of Jesus is to save men from a punishment which they all justly deserve.

How, or by what means, is this to be effected? Answer. By Christ's suffering this punishment as man's vicar or substitute. This is the only ground on

which those who are commonly called *orthodox* profess to hope. The law is just and good, and it must be magnified and made honorable. But since man has broken and dishonored the law, in order that it may triumph over this dishonor which man has cast upon it, its dreadful sanction *must be suffered;* and it must be suffered by man, the transgressor, unless some substitute suffer it in his stead. Accordingly, they cannot hope to escape from suffering the whole penalty of the law, only on the ground that Christ has suffered it in their stead. On the ground that Christ has suffered what in their stead? Not the pains and miseries of this life, and death itself; for these they expect to suffer themselves. And besides, these compose no part of the real penalty of the law. Or, at most, they are only a kind of foretaste of it, or a few trifling sparks of that fire, the full and infinite blaze of which is reserved for the future state. No; according to the sentiment we are now considering, it is not "the pains and miseries of this life, and death itself," but "the pains of hell forever," "*immortal pains*," that Christ must suffer, in order to afford us any ground to hope for salvation. *Tempests of angry fire must beat upon his naked soul, in an eternal storm!!* Shocking thought! Is such the fate of him of whom the angel said, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus?" Can the Saviour of men never see peace? Must he forever dwell "far in the deep where darkness reigns," there to suffer "immortal pains?"

If these be the "storms of vengeance" which justice has laid up for sinners, and Christ suffer as their substitute, such must truly be his suffering. But the subject has become too painful. The thought strikes us with a cold chill of horror. It appears there must be something wrong in the doctrine before us. At any

rate, it fills us with painful anxiety, and we fly to the testimony for relief.

Is there anything in the testimony to prove that Jesus is suffering immortal pains? No, there certainly is not. Nor is there the least proof that Jesus has suffered, or ever will suffer, *any* pains, beyond "the pains and miseries of this life, and death itself."

But we are not left merely to argue that there is no proof that Christ suffers immortal pains in a land of darkness and despair; for there is positive evidence on the other side, that it is not so. There is proof that Jesus has ascended to heaven, and is seated in glory at the right hand of the throne of God.

Where, then, is our hope? If we can hope for salvation only on the ground that Jesus suffers a punishment of "immortal pains" in our stead, where then is our hope? It has vanished; "and, like the baseless fabric of a vision, leaves not a wreck behind."

But here it has been argued that Jesus Christ is the very God. And the infinite God could endure as great a quantity of misery in a short time as the whole world could suffer to all eternity. So on this ground man may be cleared from the fore-mentioned punishment, because God himself, when he died on the cross, suffered as much in quantity, though short in duration.

Is this, then, the foundation of the Christian hope? the idea that the eternal Jehovah, the Creator and Governor of the immense universe, he whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, in whom we live, move, and have our being, was actually nailed to a tree by the hands of men, and there suffered and died! The thought is shocking; it is even blasphemous. It is repugnant to reason, and no less repugnant to divine revelation.

No; it is replied, Christ did not suffer as God, but it was only as man that he suffered. Though Christ is God and man, mysteriously united, yet it was not the infinite, but the finite, the human part, that suffered and died. Now the pretended ground of hope has again vanished. Forasmuch as it *is* and *must* be admitted, that it was only as man that Christ suffered and died, this last attempt to make his sufferings amount to as much as the endless misery of the whole human family, is mere nothing. The fact is, if we have no hope for salvation, only on the position that Christ *has* suffered, or *is* to suffer, immortal pains in our stead, we have no ground to hope all. We may sit down in darkness and utter despair.

Again, this system of the vicarious sufferings of Christ is a reflection on the character of God, and detracts too much from the excellency and glory of his plan of salvation. For it supposes that he saves us from deserved punishment, by punishing an innocent person in our stead. And this is directly against the law of God, as well as against all human ideas of justice. Suppose a criminal, under sentence of death, is committed to the disposal of the President of the United States. The President wishes to spare the guilty person, but cannot feel satisfied to spare him, unless he puts the full amount of punishment on somebody else. So he turns and executes an innocent person and clears the guilty. The very report of such a procedure would strike the citizens of these United States with horror. To say that the innocent person offered himself as a substitute, would not justify the acceptance of such an offer by the civil magistrate. It would still be directly against the spirit of our wholesome laws. And these human laws, which forbid the innocent being punished

instead of the guilty, are founded on the law of God.

It seems to us a censurable species of irreverence, to hold up that system for the gospel purpose of God, which represents the Divine Lawgiver as violating the principles of his own law. For he has expressly declared that one shall not be punished for another's sins, but every man shall die for his own sins. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." And Jesus said to the Pharisees, "If ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless." Yet the systems of men represent the infinitely just, wise and merciful Father of us all, as practising on this principle which the Scriptures condemn, punishing the innocent in order to clear the guilty.

II. Before we spend longer time in examining the schemes which men have devised for saving themselves from suffering an incurred penalty of endless punishment, it may be well to search the Book of the Law, to see if there be any such penalty there. The first pair had a law given them, and death was threatened as the punishment of disobedience. But this death was comprised in the miseries which were to be endured in this life. This we learn from the judgment which was given upon the first case of transgression. When the man and woman transgressed, they were called to trial, convicted of sin, and sentenced according to the law which was given them. What was the sentence? The Judge, when he pronounced the sentence, told them that because they had transgressed, they should suffer certain miseries *till they should return to the dust.*

The second trial which is recorded, was upon a

very noted offence, Cain's murder of his innocent brother. The Judge, who is the great Creator and Lawgiver himself, delivered the sentence thus. "The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother's blood from thy hand. When thou tillest the ground it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth." These matters were duly considered in chapters IV. and V.

We have also examined the law given by Moses. There we find some threatenings of very severe punishment, but nothing like that from which it has been imagined that Jesus came to save mankind. The most severe threatenings which we find in all the law of Moses, are recorded in the 26th of Leviticus. There greater and greater punishments are threatened in case of continued transgression, till it comes to this. "And if ye will not for all this hearken unto me, but walk contrary unto me, Then I will walk contrary unto you also in fury; and I, even I, will chastise you seven times for your sins. And ye shall eat the flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters shall ye eat. And I will make your cities waste, and bring your sanctuaries unto desolation. * * And I will scatter you among the heathen, and will draw out a sword after you; and your land shall be desolate, and your cities waste. * * And upon them that are left alive of you, I will send a faintness into their hearts in the lands of their enemies; and ye shall perish among the heathen, and the land of your enemies shall eat you up."

Though there were proportional punishments to be *inflicted upon* all sins, yet this dreadful penalty which

we have now read, was not to be incurred by any or the least offence. They were not told that they had already deserved it, and the Messiah was appointed to screen them from it. It would only be incurred by the continued practice of iniquity, after a long series of lesser chastisements had proved ineffectual to reclaim them.

But how is it with regard to these reasonable and just punishments which the law does denounce upon sinners? Did the "just" Saviour suffer for the "unjust," to save them from those punishments when they have been incurred? No, we have not yet found the least intimation in the Scriptures, that after men have continued their transgressions to the degree upon which certain punishment has been threatened, they shall then be saved from the deserved and threatened punishment.

The children of Israel continued to transgress till they incurred the foregoing penalty, and then they suffered it. These threatenings, pronounced nearly 2000 years before, were then fully executed. And though Jesus had then been on the earth, we do not find that it was any part of his labors to devise a scheme to save this people from said punishment when they had incurred it.

To be sure Jesus called on this people to repent, and turn from their iniquities, that they might avoid that dreadful judgment. But this was not calling on them to escape that judgment after they should have fully deserved it, but it was calling on them to avoid incurring it. They had not then filled up that measure of iniquity upon which such punishment was predicated.

But when Jesus had called upon them to no effect, seeing their hardness of heart and blindness of mind,

and knowing also what their prophets had long foretold, he said unto them, "Fill ye up therefore the measure of your fathers; * * that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias, son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily, I say unto you, all these things shall come upon this generation."

From this it appears their measure of iniquity was not then full. That is, they had not fully incurred all this punishment. So when Jesus called on them to turn from their iniquities, that they might escape this dreadful punishment, it was not counselling with them how they might escape it after they had fully incurred it; but it was calling on them to avoid incurring it, to avoid filling up that measure of iniquity upon which said punishment was predicated.

Indeed, so far is it from the truth that Jesus undertook to screen men from their just deserts, or to purchase impunity for them, that he testifies of himself that the Father had committed judgment to him;[j] and that he, in his kingdom, will render to every man according to his deeds.[k] And St. Paul assures us, in the most positive form of testimony, that of an interrogatory assertion, that as, under the law given by the disposition of angels, every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, *we cannot* escape, if we sin against the principles of the gospel.[l]

We have now examined the common sentiment on the questions, *From what has Jesus undertaken to save sinners*? and how? The common sentiment is, that he saves sinners from suffering an incurred penalty of the law, which is endless death or misery.

[j] *John v. 27.* [k] Matt. xvi. 27; Rom. ii. 6—16. [l] Heb. ii. 2. 3.

And the ground of the sinner's hope for salvation has been the supposition that Christ has suffered the penalty in our stead. But, on examination, this hope vanisheth away. For it is found that Christ has never suffered any such penalty. It is also seen that this sentiment dishonors the Judge of heaven and earth; for it would have us build all our hopes of good on the supposition that *he* punishes the innocent instead of the guilty; and this is contrary to the laws both of God and man. The word of God forbids that we should ever expect that he will clear us from our deserts by punishing an innocent person in our stead.

Being wearied with the absurdities and shocking aspects of the doctrine, which many of our esteemed fellow-Christians hold up in theory, we determined to appeal "to the Law and the Testimony." But we have found no such penalty there as had been asserted. Therefore there is no need of our seeking any longer after ground to hope for salvation from a deserved endless punishment; because the law requires no such punishment.

But we have seen that the law does threaten punishment, proper punishment, upon transgressors. We have also inquired whether it is the object of Jesus' mission to save men, (not from the imaginary punishment which learned creeds have threatened, but) from the real punishment threatened by the law: that is, whether it is the business of Jesus to save us from suffering the threatenings of the law after we have incurred them. And we find that it is not. We have no ground to believe that we can commit sin with impunity. If we go on in sin, we *must* suffer the miserable consequences. "The wages of sin is death;" and "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." "In his sin

that he hath sinned, and in his trespass that he hath trespassed, he shall die." So saith the law; and Jesus himself has never offered anything in opposition to it. He has never engaged to prevent men's suffering death as long as the law requires, which is as long as they are sinners.

## SECTION II.

### *Salvation from Sin.*

Let us now renew the inquiry;—What is the salvation to be effected by the mission of Christ? We find an answer to this question by reading the latter clause of the verse which commands the name Jesus, or Saviour, to be given him. "Thou shalt call his name Jesus; *for he shall save his people from their sins.*"[m] This is the object of Jesus' mission, to "save his people *from* their sins." The same sentiment is expressed by the saying, "He suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."[n]

But what is the difference, it will be asked, between saving people from their sins, and saving them from deserved punishment. The difference is easily shown. Let us take for instance the case of the Israelites, referred to in the preceding section. They were threatened with different degrees of punishment upon different degrees of sin, till it came to the last and most severe; viz., "If ye will not after all this hearken unto me, I will punish you yet seven times for your sins. The flesh of your sons, and the flesh of your daughters ye shall eat," &c. Now there had been lesser punishments threatened upon lesser and preceding sins. Therefore, when they had sinned to the degree men-

[m] Matt. i. 21. [n] 1 Peter iii. 18.

tioned next below this last, and had suffered the punishment threatened upon such sin, they did not deserve the last mentioned punishment, till they had sinned to the last mentioned degree.

Now when they had sinned to the last mentioned degree, to have screened them from the threatened punishment would have been against the law, and proved the threatenings of Jehovah to be null and void. But *to have saved them from sin;* that is, to have saved them from committing that last mentioned degree of sin, would have saved them from the punishment, not by screening them from it after they had incurred it, but by keeping them from deserving it. And this, of course, would not have been saving them from any incurred punishment; it would have been against no law; nor would it have made false any threatening of God.

But here the reader will naturally, and very properly too, push his inquiry, "If Jesus did not suffer as a substitute for men, to save them from deserved punishment, how shall we understand the language before quoted from Peter,—"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God?" And what then is the meaning of other Scriptures like these?—"But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; but the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." "He hath borne our sins in his own body on the tree." How hath he "borne our sins," and "suffered for us," unless he has suffered in our stead the *punishment* of our sins?

I answer, in any sense in which Jesus has suffered to redeem us from sin, and bring us to God, he has suffered for us, and has borne our sins. A shepherd has a flock of sheep astray in the wilderness, and undertakes to redeem them out of their lost estate, into his fold. But in doing this he has to endure many labors and hardships. Now in these labors and hardships he suffers for his flock. He bears their wanderings; not by taking on himself in their stead all the consequences of their wanderings; they themselves must bear all the necessary consequences of their rambling. It is the shepherd's work to save them from their wanderings, or from their lost estate; and thus he saves them from farther harm, only by bringing them out of that condition which occasioned their sufferings. And he suffers for them, and bears their wanderings, not by becoming their substitute, but by taking upon himself those labors and troubles, which fall in his way as he perseveres in the work of their redemption.

Let our simile now be applied. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have been wandering in the wilderness of sin. Jesus, as a kind shepherd, has undertaken to redeem us out of the wilderness of sin and misery, and bring us into the fold of righteousness and peace. In carrying on this work, he had to pass through scenes of suffering, and even a painful and ignominious death. In these labors and sufferings, he suffered for us, he bore our sins. But, like the sheep in the wilderness, we ourselves must suffer all the just and necessary consequences of our wanderings; for he saves us from misery only by bringing us out of that state and condition which occasions it. And Jesus bore our sins, not by suffering, as our substitute, our

*deserved* punishment, but by enduring all the labors and troubles which came in his way, as he pursued the gracious work of saving us *from sin*, or from *deserving* punishment. To this sentiment apply the Scriptures just quoted. "By his stripes we are healed;"—that is, healed of sin. "Christ hath once suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God."

Washington suffered for this country; he bore the troubles and misfortunes of the people; and if he had died in battle at the hands of the enemy, while contending for his country's redemption, he would have *died* for the people. But when Major Andre, or some other criminal, had been sentenced by the law to be hanged, if our Congress had accepted and executed Washington as a substitute, it would have been a different case, utterly different in principle. If such an event had taken place, it would have cast a blot on the pages of American history; and whenever we read it, we should have been ashamed of the folly and injustice of our government. Now the same difference is apparent between the sense in which Christ died for us according to the Scriptures, and that which *men* have asserted, as there would have been between Washington's meeting death in his course, while laboring for the redemption of his people, and his being executed by his own government as a substitute for Andre.

But there is a key to this subject in the 8th of Matthew. "When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils; and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took

our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." How was this saying fulfilled, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses?" Was it by Jesus' becoming sick in their stead? When he found one sick of a fever, did he take the fever from that person on himself, and so become sick of a fever in his stead? When he found people blind and dumb, did he become blind and dumb in their stead? Is this the way that Christ fulfilled the saying, "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses?" No; the text informs us, "He *healed* all that were sick; that the saying might be fulfilled, He bare our sicknesses."

This, I say, will serve as a key to our subject. If ever we come to doubt how the saying is fulfilled, "He bare our sins," let us then inquire, how was the saying fulfilled, "He bare our sicknesses?" And when we see that this saying was fulfilled by his *healing* their sicknesses, then we may understand that the saying "He bare our sins," or *spiritual* sicknesses, is fulfilled by his healing them. "He shall save his people from their sins."

OBJECTION.

Perhaps the question ought here to be considered, which has, by a certain description of persons, been thought of considerable weight, viz., If the law itself do not require an endless punishment; if man himself may suffer the punishment of his own sins, and not be endlessly miserable, of what use is a Saviour at all?

To prepare the way for a simple answer to this question, let us propose another. If the sick man may suffer the pain of his own disease, what need has he of a physician? or what need has he of being healed? Your answer is, if his disease produces pain, *and he*

*must suffer it himself*, he has the greater need of a physician. For in this case, the longer the disorder remains, the longer the distress continues; and it is necessary that the disease should be removed, that its painful consequences may cease.

Here you will observe, that the person who has been healed of some disorder, has suffered all the pain which the law of our physical nature requires. This law does not require that one shall suffer the pain of a disease, after the disease is removed, and he is restored to health. It only requires that he shall suffer the pain as long as the disease continues.

So with the *moral* law. It only requires that a person shall suffer the pain of his moral disease as long as he continues in it. If a man commit iniquity, saith Ezekiel, "In his sin that he hath sinned he shall die." "There is no peace to the wicked." "God will render to every man according to his work. Tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil." This the sinner must suffer *himself;* for it is the word of God who cannot lie. Therefore a Saviour is absolutely necessary, to save the sinner from sin. For as long as he continues in sin, this threatened death, or tribulation and anguish, will abide upon him. Hence, if men were to continue in sin to all eternity, they would be eternally miserable. For moral misery is coeval with the moral disease.

We can now discover that the work of salvation by Christ is very beautifully represented by the healing of the sick. For by this representation, we learn that he saves us from moral woe, by removing the cause, and restoring us to a state of spiritual health, which is holiness. "Christ loved the church, and

gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; and that he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish."[o]

## RECAPITULATION.

We are now prepared to give short and direct answers to these several inquiries.

1st. *Who are the unjust, for whom the just Saviour suffered?* Answer: They are mankind as a race of beings. "All we like sheep have gone astray, (have become unjust,) and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all." (Isa. liii. 6.) "He, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man." (Heb. ii. 9.)

2d. *In what sense are we to understand that Christ suffered for the* UNJUST? *Has he suffered the* PUNISHMENT *which the unjust deserved, or for the* SINS *of the unjust?* Answer: Christ was not punished instead of the unjust, which we have seen to be contrary to the Scriptures, and to involve a principle contrary to all revealed justice. But he has suffered for, or on account of, the sins of the unjust; because it was in the prosecution of a work for their salvation from sin and its evils, that he suffered and died. He "bare our sins," in the same sense in which he fulfilled the saying, "he bare our sicknesses," viz., by sympathy, —and by taking on himself the charge of the case, and the application of the cure.

3d. *If Christ has suffered for the sins of the unjust, are the unjust to suffer for their own sins?* Answer: Yes; because he did not suffer, as a substitute, the punishment of their sins; but he suffered as the ser-

[o] Eph. v. 26.

vant of God and friend of man, and attested by his own blood the verity of that love Divine which shall overcome all evil with good, and bring us, as dear children, to our Father, God.

4th. *If men do not suffer for their own sins, how does "every one" receive according to his works, whether good or bad?* Answer: Men *do* and *shall* suffer for their own sins. To deny this is to contradict the general train of Scripture testimony on this subject. As the strayed sheep in the wilderness, which the shepherd seeks to restore, must suffer the evils of their own wanderings,—and the shepherd bears their wanderings only by sympathy, and in the labors and sufferings of restoring them,—and he saves them from continued sufferings only by bringing them out of the condition which caused them to suffer;—so must we suffer the miseries of our sins while we will continue to be sinners,—and Jesus saves us from continued sufferings only by bringing us out of the condition which occasions our miseries, viz., sin. "He suffered, the just for the unjust, *that he might bring us to God.*"

The reader will perceive, by duly considering the expositions which we have offered on the subject of the foregoing inquiries, that we are the only denomination of Christians who believe and maintain the doctrine so abundantly taught in the Scriptures, viz., that "the Lord searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." All other doctrines make the whole multitude of those who shall be saved in heaven, be they more or less, to be exceptions to the truth of these Scriptural teachings. Consequently, whenever they have aught to say of a

sect of religionists who deny the threatenings of the Bible, we may promptly and justly reply unto them, *Thou art the sect.*

## SECTION III.

### *The General Purpose of the Saviour's Mission.*

In viewing Jehovah's purpose through the mission of his Son, we discover his grand design in the creation of our race. For in this we see the purposed inheritance of man, his ultimate allotment. Surely, then, there is no subject that can engage the attention of man, which is so important as this. It would be with an earnest solicitude that men would search the revelations of some political economy, which should promise an increase of national wealth. With what devout faithfulness, then, should we search the record of the infinite Father's will and purpose, involving the interest of our immortal being.

There is no place for cavil here—nor for fear, other than reverential fear. True, we are not now advancing upon a subject which relates to the reward of our doings. It is upon an inheritance which is "not according to our works, but according to the purpose and grace of God, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." [p] But we should not for this reason start back, shut our eyes, and refuse to look, lest we should see revelations of grace so glorious as to paralyze our moral efforts. From the mere fact that a subject does not relate to the payment of our earnings, it does not follow that it is demoralizing to consider it. While we are assured that, "though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished," [q]

[p] 2 Tim. i. 9. [q] Pro. xi. 21.

and that for all the good we do we shall receive payment in full, even for the smallest deed of virtue,[r] we cannot be harmed by discovering other good, which is beyond our merits. Are you afraid to open your eyes to the wonderful revelations of science, lest you should behold so much of the wisdom and majesty and glory of God, which are not according to your works, as to afflict you with moral indifference? NEVER! These advancing discoveries of the Creator's adorable perfections, as displayed in his works, rather elevate your moral affections, and promote their active vigor. So will "the light of knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," inspire increasing admiration and love for the Divine perfections, and add a zest to the pleasures of obedience. I say then to the reader, in the language of Gabriel to the shepherds, "Fear not"—to open your eyes and your ears to the revelations of Jesus Christ.

But there is a point presenting itself here, which I wish to settle with the reader in the outset. An understanding of it is essential to our pursuing with profit the subject before us. It relates to the reality and consistency of any such *fact*, as an efficient purpose and government of God in the moral creation. In the views taken in the first two chapters of this work, evincing the wisdom and power of God in the arrangements, designs, and government of the physical world, all will go with us. When they look into the arrangement, adaptedness, and harmony,—

> "——— the bearings and the ties,—
> The strong connexions, nice dependencies,"

of this outward system,—they will all shout the praise

[r] Matt. x. 42.

and glory of God, in view of his perfect plan and government in it.

But what is the physical universe? Of itself, alone, it is worth nothing. All this vast material creation, without a sentient creature to inhabit it, would be as useless as boundless void. The prophet says of God's creation of the world, "He created it not in vain; he made it to be inhabited." And though it is made to be the habitation of a great variety of animals, it is chiefly designed for MAN, as an *intellectual and moral being.*

It must have been for a noble purpose that God constituted mankind with *such* faculties:—and in his revealed word, and in his creation and providence, we see the proofs of his corresponding care and regard for us. The very ordinances of heaven are ordained for our benefit. This vast and stupendous outward creation, with its wonderful order and grandeur and utility, was not a sport of ingenuity and power. It was designed as a means to occupy the mind of man, and develope gradually to his understanding the wisdom, and power, and goodness of Jehovah,—thus contributing both to the physical support and the mental enjoyment of his children. What a depth of wisdom—what a vast profundity of wonderfully contrived sources of human convenience and enjoyment, is there provided in God's creation, into which the human mind is gradually making discoveries,—and which must forever have been useless, were it not for such creatures as man, with capacities to seek out and adapt their uses. Indeed, the whole visible creation, with all its wonders and utilities and glories, seems chiefly designed for us. Strike out of being the *intellectual* creation, the universe of created ***minds***,

and the chief adaptedness and glory of the material creation are lost.

What an affecting discovery do we here make of the importance of *man* in God's creation, and of the Divine regard for him. The vast material universe is specially provided for him, and is comparatively useless without him! Methinks I see the minds of my readers rising in the majesty of the subject, and conscious of the elevation of their rank, as creatures receiving so great and special attention from the Eternal, pressing the inquiry, with a pious earnestness to know, and to improve by it,—"What is the purpose of God in this crowning work of his creation?"

It is to this subject that we are to look for the chief manifestation of the Divine perfections. Yet it is here, mainly, that the creeds of men have dishonored and exploded the wisdom and power of God. They look into the physical system, and shout praises to the perfection of God's purpose and government in it;—but coming to the *intellectual* and *moral* creation, they hardly dare look whether there is a purpose and government there, evincing the wisdom and power of God, or not. It is as if you were sitting in judgment on the character of a father, and formed your decision by the splendor of his house, utterly regardless of his conduct towards his family.

Did I say that men hardly dare look into the moral system, whether there is a perfect plan and government there or not? Nay, in treating of this most important department of God's creation, they ascribe to him malevolence, and weakness, and folly. They assert that countless millions of God's immortal family will be doomed to employ their minds, and all their faculties as thinking, moral, feeling beings, in cursing

God, cursing their own existence, and in demonstrations and howlings of boundless torment. And how should this appalling catastrophe be the end of God's moral creation and government? It used, when there was more hardihood in theologians than there is now, to be assumed that this was pursuant to the original purpose of the Creator. John Calvin says, in his Book of Institutes, "All men are not created to the like estate, but to some eternal life, and to others eternal damnation, was fore-appointed."

But it is so obvious to common sense that this view denies to God that wisdom which works always to a good end, and ascribes to him a purpose which none other than a spirit of infinite malignity could devise and prosecute, that there is scarcely a man now who will ascribe to God such an original purpose. Yet, the creeds of many still embrace the same dreadful result. And why shall it so eventuate? They say the original intentions of God were good and benevolent. The creation of man was a motion of the Divine benevolence, with the design to produce and rear up a great family of children to share with him in eternal felicity. Why, then, shall the result be so painfully different, presenting, instead of the intended scene of moral beauty and blessedness, a boundless scene of moral wretchedness and ruin? Of course so many unexpected events must have taken place, and things in their operation must have had so different a bearing upon one another from what was intended, that the Deity is painfully disappointed, and irretrievably failed, in the end! There is a *failure* of the Divine plan!

This view obviously ascribes imperfection to God, in *respect to his* knowledge, his wisdom, and his power.

If unexpected events occurred to defeat the original plan of the Deity, he was of course ignorant of those contingent events. Infinite knowledge, or prescience, cannot be disappointed. To say that God foreknew the result, and yet adopted and pursued the abortive plan, is to deny his wisdom; for nothing but consummate folly will engage in a purpose it knows will fail. And in either case the *power* of God is limited; for he is represented to be unable to accomplish his own purpose, in the most important department of his creation and government.

But there is a late specious method of evading these irreverent conclusions, which result from the passing theology of the day. It is to say that God does not fail in his purpose, although his children, few, many, or all, should be the subjects of final wretchedness;—for that his purpose was that mankind should be finally happy or miserable, just as they should make themselves, under the various and counter influences in the midst of which he would place them. But strip the idea here comprised, of the sophistical garb in which it is dressed, and it is simply and plainly this,—that God had no definite purpose in the creation of the human race. By a sport of ingenuity and power he threw them out into existence, with their wonderful capacities, and cast them upon the varying and eddying tide of time, with no purpose at all as to what they should be, how they should fare, or how their faculties should be employed, whether to the production of final good or final evil!

Surely the system of faith which comprises such a view of the creation of God, cannot be received as the gospel of him, who, by a just metonymy of speech, is called the *wisdom of God.* We look into the physical

creation, and in things of comparatively no importance, there is acknowledged on all hands to have been a definite and infallible purpose in their production. But those beings, for whom all other things were made,—the universe of created minds, each one of which is of more importance than all the universe besides, are supposed to be thrown out into existence without a plan! there being with the Creator no great purpose as to their final employment and condition!—But these dark, blank, soul-mystifying schemes of religious profession, are the folly of man, and not of God.

I have made these brief references to opposites, in order to make more clear and impressive the affirmative of our subject. In the grand moral system taught by the revelation of Jesus Christ, is the highest and fullest manifestation of the wisdom, and all the perfections of God. And here his wisdom is seen to be that which is "full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy."[s] Its moving energy is *love*. And the communication of this interesting truth is the first aim and effort of the gospel. "God is love." "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."[t] And this testimony of love is for our race; for, "he, by the grace of God, tasted death for every man."[u] It is hence evinced that "the Lord is good to all and his tender mercies are over all his works."[v] Such being the moral character and disposition of the Creator, it was of course his *desire*, in the creation of our species, to make their existence to be their blessing. All, indeed, ascribe to God this benevolent desire. And as a wise Creator, he would, of course, institute

[s] *James iii. 17.* [t] Rom. v. 8. [u] Heb. ii. 9. [v] Ps. cxlv. 9.

a *purpose* agreeable to his *desire*. And so he did. By the revelation of Jesus Christ, "he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure, *which he hath purposed in himself*, that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and on earth, even in him."*

It is hence seen to be a settled point, that God hath a purpose in his moral creation,—not a purpose which may be anything or nothing, purposed and thrown at loose ends in some weak and fallible agency,—but he *hath purposed it in himself*,—committing its performance to his own wisdom and might. And this purpose is, that his moral creation shall be harmonized and beatified with his own spirit of love and blessedness, revealed in Jesus Christ. And though some have told us that if all this is true, it is not wise and prudent to preach it, yet the apostle assures us that in the full revelation of this glorious truth, God "hath abounded toward us in all *wisdom* and *prudence*." That it is so, we shall see demonstrated in the sequel.

An objection to our faith-inspiring view of the perfect and successful wisdom and power of God in his moral creation and government, has been thought to be raised from the *present existence of evil*. "God," it is said, "is as wise, and good, and powerful now, as he ever will be; and therefore as evil now exists, notwithstanding such are the perfections of God, it always may exist with equal consistency." But this is a begging of the question. There is no dispute that evil exists; *but why is it permitted to be?* We are nowhere told that it is in frustration of any purpose of

* Eph. i. 8—10.

God. God saw fit to give us our initiatory state of being in a mortal constitution, with passions and appetites subject to various and counter influences. He has given us a law, or rule of right and happiness. But he has not revealed it as his *purpose*, at once and from the beginning, to fill the minds of men with the full light and knowledge of his truth and glory, and bring to bear upon them all that moral influence, which should make this law of right the governing principle of the whole man. True, the neglect of this law is sometimes called the not doing of the *will* of God. But a will of *precept* is here meant, and not a will of purpose. Men may, and do, in this peccable state, violate the law of commandment, or rule of moral right, given them to guide and discipline. But if we once admit that men may frustrate the *purpose* of God, to our mind the Deity is dethroned,—all our hope in him is vanished, and, "like the baseless fabric of a vision, leaves not a wreck behind."

But our immortal hope is not in the will of precept, or law of commandment, which is made binding upon all men from the beginning;—it is in the revealed will of purpose which Jehovah *hath purposed in himself*. His own perfections, then, are pledged for its accomplishment—not all at the present moment, but "in the dispensation of the fulness of times." And for the accomplishment of this purpose, God will make tributary the very incidents which have been urged as objections to his successful wisdom and goodness in his plans. The experience which shall be derived both from the obedience and disobedience of the will of precept, and the rewards and punishments consequent,—and from the various blessings and trials of earth,—and from the ravages of death, and the resurrection from

the dead,—and the teachings and manifestations of truth and love,—all these disciplines, trials, mercies, and moral influences, will God make to concur, by their operations, in due time to remove the very will and disposition of wrong, and make the law of love, and life, and liberty, and praise, the ruling spirit of the universal whole.

What! the present existence of evil an objection to this hope? We have seen that the present existence of evil is not a failure of the original purpose of God;—but its eternal continuance would be. Such is the revealed word. "The creature (creation) was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God."[x] IS *the fact, then, that the creation is as God made it, subject to vanity, an argument that it shall not be as he has purposed to make it, delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God?*—The wisdom of the world is foolishness indeed, compared with the wisdom of Heaven.

The Scriptures are so full of instruction on the great subject before us, that it is difficult to restrict our selections to the space that can be afforded. But to inspire the reader with admiration of the fulness, the force, and the harmony of the inspired teachings, on this as on other great and important doctrines, I will go back to the beginning, and present specimens of the testimony as it proceeds from age to age.

On the instance of the first communication of God to man, after he had fallen under the power of evil, he

[x] Rom. viii. 20, 21.

declared in substance, that *the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head.*[y] Let us maintain, now, the simplicity of an inquiring child, and receive this, and every other witness, in its legitimate and natural bearing. Go back in your thoughts to that interesting occasion. There stand the human race, in embryo, in their first progenitors. They have just fallen a prey to deception, and become involved in the bondage of sin. The source of the deception, and the consequent evil that is preying upon them, is represented by the metaphor of a serpent, which is an emblem of *cunning*. And now, their Creator and Father, for their encouragement and hope, declares in their hearing, that the woman's seed shall bruise the serpent's head. As the bruising of the head denotes entire destruction, the plain indication of this passage to the unsophisticated mind, is, that God would raise up one of the woman's progeny, who should make an end of evil, and free from its dominion the moral creation.

There is the same indication in the promise of God revealed to Abraham, and renewed to Isaac, and again to Jacob:—"In thy seed shall all nations (kindreds and families) of the earth be blessed."[z] St. Peter applies this to Jesus Christ; and explains the promised blessing to be the salvation described in the preceding section, deliverance from sin. "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you first, God, having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."[a] St. Paul also

[y] Gen. iii. 15. [z] Gen. xviii. 18; xxii. 18; xxvi. 4; xxviii. 14.
[a] Acts iii. 25, 26.

draws from this ancient promise the same hope of *spiritual* good. To the Galatians he says, "And the Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed." And he further assures us that there is no principle involved in the law, which was given to Moses four hundred and thirty years after this gospel promise, which shall in any manner interfere to prevent the graciously promised work of moral renovation.[b]

The prophet Isaiah, describing in poetic strain the blessed work of Messiah's mission, says,—"He shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them."[c] Observe, it is with the *breath of his lips* that he will slay the wicked,—the word of his truth and grace. And as it is not with the brute creation, but the moral world, that his mission has to do, what is here said of the friendliness and docility of the leopard, wolf and lion, is a poetic description of the effect upon the *moral* world, to be wrought by the reign of Christ.

The same blessed work is signified again by a deliverance from darkness and prison. "I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison,

[b] Gal. iii. 8, 17. [c] Isa. xi. 4, 6.

and them that set in darkness out of the prison-house."[d]

There is an important point in all these gospel testimonies, to which I would call the reader's particular attention. They do not treat on the reward of human virtue, but on the plan of God to produce virtue itself. We are not here instructed as to what shall be the allotment of those who will escape from darkness and from prison; but we are taught of the purpose of God's moral government through Christ, *to open* the blind eyes, *to bring out* the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house.

The purpose of God in Christ contemplates mankind as in moral darkness, in the bondage of sin and error; and it institutes plans and arrangements for their enlightenment and moral renovation. By duly observing this trait in the gospel teachings, as you make progress, you will be the better qualified to appreciate our elucidation of the same in the sequel.

Passing over a world of instruction on this interesting subject, by the prophets, we will come and listen to the first annunciation of the Saviour's advent. "And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, *Fear not; for, behold, I bring unto you good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people.* For unto you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."[e]

Unto whom is Christ born to be a Saviour? This was addressed to the shepherds of Judea; "Unto *you*

[d] *Isa.* xlii. 6, 7. [e] Luke ii. 8—11.

is born a Saviour." Is he born for others? Yes; for the angel said this good news shall be to *all people*,—"unto *you* is born a Saviour." So, then, the credentials with which the Messiah is introduced upon earth, correspond with the expectation which prophetic visions had inspired. And who can be indifferent to this sweet angelic message? All heaven is in excitement. The angel host, in glowing love to men, seeing the end of that high mission which shall make *them* angels too, draw near to earth in rapturous song,—"*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men.*"

"Angelic hosts above
The blest Redeemer sing,
And all the blissful seats of love
With loud hosannas ring.

"Ye pilgrims too, below,
Your hearts and voices raise;
Let every breast with gladness glow,
And every mouth be praise."

[*Digression.* Kind reader, I desire you to hold in mind the point of progress in our subject at which we now break off, while you go with me in a short digression. I solemnly ask you to ponder, with prayerful candor, the question I have to ask you. The stage of our progress in the study of Messiah's mission, is the precise spot for our halting to turn our face to the question I allude to. The matter of inquiry is this,—How can we expect to find, in this blessed gospel mission, announced from heaven as matter of rejoicing unto all people,—and insuring results, the view of which made songs of praise resound through upper worlds,—*how*, I ask, can we expect to find, in this special economy of grace, a revelation of infinite, revengeful wrath, to

prey upon countless millions of souls immortalized in endless torments? It is a settled case, that if we are to find this doctrine in the inspired revelation at all, we are to find it revealed in this gospel ministry of glad tidings to all people, which filled angelic minds with thoughts of *Heaven's good will to men!!*

Be gentle, dear reader:—I perceive that you will turn your head with horror at the disgusting incongruity. The thought that such an appalling doctrine should, as an essential and distinguishing constituent, peculiarly belong to such a glorious system of love, is distracting to the mind which has lived upon *harmonies*. Such a combination of theological parts, if it were not infinitely more horrid, would be no less ludicrous than the poet's description of the incongruous painter:

"Suppose a painter to a human head
Should join a horse's neck, and wildly spread
The various plumage of a feathered kind
O'er limbs of different beasts absurdly joined;
* * * * * *
Would you not laugh, such pictures to behold?
Such is the book, which, like a sick man's dreams,
Varies all shapes, and mixes all extremes.
* * * * * *
Monstrous to mix the cruel and the kind,
Serpents with birds, and lambs with tigers joined."[f]

But at the enormous incongruity, which makes a boundless world of moral desolation and inexhaustible anguish the revelation of the glad tidings, and of good will from Heaven to men,—at this, I say, we cannot laugh. In the language of its eloquent advocate, Saurin, "It makes some melancholy, and others mad;" and to thousands "it makes life itself a cruel

[f] Francis' Horace.

bitter" And how can it otherwise affect the sensitive soul that truly believes it? To feel the pressure of *infinite* consequences pending our present doings, —"infinite joy, or endless woe"[6]—to be turned one way or the other to our allotment by our every thought, word, or deed in life,—is what no mind, grasping its magnitude, could endure, and be sane, for a single hour. And though there is a theoretic belief of this doctrine, which, in some degree affects its millions,—and though thousands have been capable of realizing the tremendous hazard, so as to be crushed and made wrecks by its weight,—yet it is a happy circumstance that comparatively few are constitutionally capable of grasping the subject.

St. Paul congratulated his Christian brethren, in that they had "not come unto the mountain that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and the voice of words, which voice they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more;" but that they were "come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." But if the doctrine which we have now turned aside to look upon, were the genius of mount Sion, the contrast must have been reversed. For I would leave these mountains of human divinity, and cast myself down at the foot of mount Sinai with pleasure. And Sinai's cloud, which, compared with the *Christian* gospel, was so black and portentous, should, in comparison with this human gospel, be as the soft cloud of spring which variegates the sky; and Sinai's thunder, which was comparatively so fearfully terrific, should be as the mild floating breezes along the green meadow:—for, even our

[6] Watts, H. 55, B. 2.

opposers being judges, there was nothing revealed on Sinai's summit, by a million times multiplied without end, so terrible, as the doctrine of immortal anguish, entire and hopeless torments.

That this doctrine was not revealed under the Old Testament dispensation, was shown in the appropriate place, under the penalties of the law. But I will here add, not proof, but further evidence that I did not pervert the testimony in making out the proof referred to. One circumstance to this point is the fact, that such a man as Professor Stuart, the head of the first Calvinistic school in our country, with all his *desire* to find this doctrine in the Old Testament, is unable to put his finger upon its revelation there. He does, indeed, in his Exegetical Essays, make an effort to palm this doctrine, in some form, upon two or three passages of these Scriptures. But the manner of his doing this, sets his entire want of proof in a light most strong and conclusive. The method of his argument is substantially this:—"Sheol denotes, primarily, the *under-world, the region of the dead*, whither both the righteous and the wicked go, at their decease. And in this sense it is commonly used. Still, there are certain texts in which Sheol occurs, where it may indeed be explained, as usual, of the state of the dead universally, but where it may also be supposed to include the idea of a place of punishment there; that is, *if we first take for granted* that the respective writers held that there was such a place there."[h]

What a remarkable argument is this, from *such* an author! And how forcible is its evidence to the point before us! With his deep penetration, strong grasp of intellect, extensive learning, and irrepressible desire to

[h] *Stuart's Essays*, p. 106—114; and note in Uni. Ex. v. 3. p. 412.

sustain the doctrine in question, he can find no revelation of it in the ancient Scriptures. The *most* he can find, is, two or three figurative texts, where *it may be supposed* that a place of torment beyond death is alluded to, *if we take for granted* that the respective writers held there was such a place there! So, then, these writers have never revealed such a doctrine. They have never *told* us that they held that there was such a place in hades as a place of torment. We have got to *take for granted*, without proof, that they held it, and then we *may suppose* that they included the disputed idea in the texts referred to. Vain, then, has been the learned Professor's search, in those Scriptures, for the doctrine in question.

I must also present the reader, in this place, with the conclusion of the learned and critical orthodox *Jahn*, upon the same subject.

"That the ancient Hebrews believed, that there was a difference, in their situation in SHEOL, between the good and the bad, although it might indeed be inferred from their ideas of the justice and benignity of God, (Matt. xxii. 32,) cannot be proved by direct testimony. The probability, however, that this was the case, seems to be increased, when it is remembered, that the author of the book of Ecclesiastes, who, in chapter iii. 18, speaks somewhat skeptically of the immortality of the soul, says in chapter xii. 17, that the '*spirit shall return to God who gave it*,' [and, although he nowhere in express terms holds up the doctrine of future rewards and punishments, informs us in chapter xii. 14, of something very much like it, viz. '*That God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether* good or evil.' "]

"We have not authority, therefore, decidedly to say, that any other motives were held out to the ancient Hebrews to pursue the good and to avoid the evil, than those which were derived from the rewards and punishments of this life. That *these* were the motives which were presented to their minds, in order to influence them to pursue a right course of conduct, is expressly asserted in Isa. xxvi. 9, 10, and may be learned also from the imprecations which are met with in many parts of the Old Testament."[1]

Finally, it can hardly be regarded as a disputed point in theology, among the learned, that endless punishment was not revealed in the ancient oracles of God, which he committed to his chosen people. Of course, the people of those earlier ages, including the first four thousand years of the world, are not to be judged by a law involving such a penalty. It is contrary to all justice, human and Divine, to judge a man by an *ex post facto* law. The earlier inhabitants of the earth were amenable only to the law under which they lived. If endless punishment, then, is a constituent of the second covenant, or covenant of grace! which is a revelation of the gospel of good tidings to all people!! none but those whose lot it is to live in the *Christian* age, can be exposed to its terrible vengeance. What a covenant were this, in the light of which for the believers to say, "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."[2] And if Sion's thunder were so infinitely more tremendous than that of Sinai, what a wonderful congratulation was that of St. Paul to the Hebrew Christians, that they

[1] John's Biblical Archæology, § 114. [2] 2 Tim. i. 7.

had not come unto the Sinai of their fathers, but that they had come unto Mount Sion!

But enough of this. That merciless doctrine, which the learned who *would* find it, *cannot*, in the old covenant, forms no part of the new. Therefore we will return to our subject, the purpose of the Saviour's mission.]

And now we are at home again, returned from our long digression, to "the glorious gospel of the blessed God." I was showing that the mission of Jesus comprises matters of joyful interest to the human race. In the same light do the Saviour's own words abundantly represent him. "For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost."[k] And he represents his faithfulness to be as that of a shepherd, who, in pursuit of the wandering of his flock, will never relinquish his enterprise, while there is one lost sheep in the wilderness. He will press on, to the joy set before him, the greeting of the last poor wanderer restored.[l]

The apostles of Jesus, to whom he gave the words the Father had given to him, abound in the most plain and unambiguous testimony on the purpose of God in Christ. I have drawn somewhat upon them already, and shall not find space, nor do I deem it needful, to give but a few additional specimens of their style of gospel witness. St. Paul, in his epistle to the Romans, (v. 15—19,) represents the greatness and extent of the cure, through Christ, of the evils of humanity, by placing it in comparison with those evils, and giving it the supremacy. "But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if, through the offence of one, many be dead; much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man,

[k] Matt. xviii. 11. [l] Matt. xviii. 12, 13; Luke xv. 4—6.

Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many. * * * * Therefore, as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men unto condemnation, even so, by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous."

We are not permitted, by the rule of Divine judgment revealed in the Scriptures, to construe this as meaning that the individual sins of Adam are imputed to his posterity; for it is declared by Jehovah that the son shall not be condemned for the sins of the father.[m] The apostle seems to take a view of mankind as standing in the earthy or Adamic nature, and as all being subject, to a greater or less degree, to the same infirmities and evils, in that same nature. Then, on the other hand, he shows it to be the plan of Divine grace to bring about the same effective and characteristic relation between mankind and Christ, or the heavenly nature;—and to make this relation equally extensive, and even *more* productive of its legitimate fruits. To deny this construction, would be to make this portion of the Record without meaning.

The same sentiment is expressed in Rom. viii. 20, 21. The passage was incidentally quoted in a former part of this section, but we introduce it again for a more critical examination. "For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope; because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." The term rendered *creature* in this quotation, is the same as that rendered *creation*

[m] Ezek. xviii.

in the succeeding verse. It is obviously used for the human species. It cannot mean *less* than the entire human species, because no less than the whole of this creation was made subject to vanity, and this word is never used to designate any favored class, such as believers. Indeed, believers are distinctly and separately referred to in the succeeding context, as, at least, but a portion of that creation. "For we know that the *whole creation* groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but *ourselves also*, which have the first fruits of the spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body." Here, then, we are certified by the apostle, that by the creation spoken of in this case, he means the *whole creation*, (or *pasa ktisis*, every creature.)

Again, nothing *more* than the human creation could have been meant; for it comprises only such creatures as "shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." It may no more be applied to brute and inanimate creatures, than may the commission of our Lord to his apostles, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to *every creature*."

And now, what is the truth affirmed, concerning the human creation? In the first place, it "was made subject to vanity,"—constituted mortal, and placed in a peccable state,—"not willingly," not of its own choice; the human species were not counselled as to the constitution in which they should be brought into being, or the world in which they should be placed; —"but by reason of him who hath subjected the same, in hope." God, in his wisdom, saw fit to introduce mankind into an initiatory state of being like this

—*in hope.* This is not man's final home. This is not his chief inheritance. He is heir to an immortal life. Consequently, God has placed in the very constitution of his present being, a desire, a longing, a travail of soul, a hope, reaching for that greater good to come. At verse 19th, it is called an "*earnest expectation*, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God,"—*wanting* a manifestation of that blessed truth which was already possessed by those who were characteristically the sons of God. At verse 20th, it is called *hope*, and at verse 22d, *travail.* All these terms are used to denote that principle in the constitution of man, which is the basis of the religious sentiment, and which wants the truth of Christianity.

And why has God, in placing his moral children in this dying, peccable state, inwrought with their nature the principles of this hope? The answer is before us:—"Because the creation shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God." In the consummation of his gospel purpose, God will show forth a perfect work, —a moral creation in a finished state, answering to the designs indicated by the "hope" of their incipient being.

There is a most luminous testimony of St. Paul, on our present subject, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, which I will reserve to a subsequent chapter, on the resurrection of the dead. The following to the Colossians (i. 19—21) is to the point. "For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things tc himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were

sometime alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled." That the phrase *all things*, in this case, refers not to a present visible church of believers, but to the mass of mankind, is evident from the circumstance that the latter class are said to be now already reconciled. And that the great reconciliation promised, is spiritual assimilation, is shown by the reference made to the reconciliation of christian believers, as a sample of the entire work to be accomplished.

Another most clear and conclusive witness to the great truth before us, is in the following remarkable words: (Phil. ii. 9—11;) "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." The saying, *Every creature above the earth, on the earth, and under it*, was a common periphrasis among the Greek writers, for the *universe*. The idea is, that God designs that the universe of his moral creatures, whether now living or dead, whether above the earth, on the earth, or under it, shall be brought into subjection to his Son Jesus Christ. And this subjection can be no other than spiritual, because Christ reigns in no other than a spiritual kingdom. And the same kind of subjection is involved in the act of confessing him their Lord, their Owner and Master, to the glory of God the Father.

But we should extend our work to the making of many books, were we to undertake the quotation and exposition of one half of the Bible testimonies upon

the great gospel purpose. I will barely add, in this place, that in confirmation of the view we took of the first quotation from Genesis, upon the bruising of the serpent's head, St. Paul says to the Hebrews, (ii. 14 15,) "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." The word *devil* (diabolos) signifies an impostor, a deceiver, an enemy, &c. It is sometimes used for personal adversaries and deceivers, and sometimes for evil principles. In this case it seems to be used as a sort of personification of the principles of evil, including the physical with the moral,—whatever is *adverse* to the well-being of man. All this shall be destroyed by the energies of that power and love Divine, which are sealed and attested by the death of Christ. And again; (1 John iii. 8;) "For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil." These works are sin, and its concomitant evils.

Contemplate, now, the sum of what we have learned from the Scriptures, of *the purpose of the Saviour's mission.* It is to enlighten the human mind, and deliver it from the prison of moral darkness,—to regenerate and purify it, and deliver it from the bondage of sin and error. It is to instruct and elevate the universe of created minds, and reconcile and harmonize them with the spirit of the Eternal; in the prosecution of which work every principle and power of evil shall be destroyed, and the universe shall join in the triumphant shout of the victory, the perfect victory, of life and good. And the designs of this gospel mission are not

appropriated to any particular class or denomination of men,—but they are for *man*, for the *offspring of God*, for the *human creation*.

To say that all the blessings proposed by this gospel purpose are suspended on precarious conditions to be performed by man, proposing that certain good shall come to the lot of those who will perform certain works of obedience, leaving it uncertain whether any will comply with the terms,—this indicates an utter blindness of mind in relation to the whole subject. This gospel purpose does not propose certain rewards to men on condition they will be free from sin, and become holy. There is abundance of Scripture which instructs us of the rewards of faith and virtue: but this gospel purpose of grace looks upon mankind in the character of sinners, and proposes, by appropriate means, to deliver them from the love and power of sin, and win their hearts and affections to truth, to holiness, and to God.

As this is an important point in the character of the Saviour's mission, on which, in truth, its value mainly depends, I will detain the reader a few moments upon it. I will take him to a portion of the inspired record, which gives special instruction on this very feature of the gospel covenant, and places it in contrast with the law. The Scripture I refer to is the eighth chapter of Hebrews, beginning at the 6th verse,—from which it reads as follows:—"*But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant*

*with the house of Israel and the house of Judah.*"— To this contrast between the two covenants, and the distinguishing characteristics of the second on the point under present consideration, we will devote a brief and respectful attention.

1st. Wherein consisted the fault of the first covenant? It was not in its unsuitableness to answer the end for which God designed it. Some have represented that God designed the first covenant as an opportunity for man to procure, by conditions performed by himself on earth, a title to heaven; but that it failed to answer this design, and so God devised a second plan for securing the same object. But the first covenant never proposed to man, as the reward of his complying with its conditions, an immortal heaven. To possess mankind of that infinite good God never devised but one plan, and that is the gospel plan whose character is our present subject. *This* we shall find to be the first and last, the *only* plan devised of God for the accomplishment of that end. And this plan shall never fail.

But the first covenant, which in some respects was faulty, was *perfect* in its place, or in view of the ends for which it was designed. It was, in the first place, designed in its immediate use, to redeem a chosen people, and generally to secure them as a people, from the popular idolatries of the world. All the sacrifices of the Mosaic ceremonial law had their meaning in this respect. Many useful animals, such as cattle, sheep, &c., were worshipped by the Egyptians and other nations, as gods. The Hebrews had their education in the midst of these idolatries, and needed some very efficient means to wean and preserve them from the prevailing practice.

Now what could be better calculated to wear off these people's superstitious veneration for those idol gods, than to habituate them to take these same creatures after whose image those idols were made, and sacrifice them as burnt offerings to the Lord Jehovah? As Moses said unto Pharaoh, when he had asked permission to go far into the wilderness to offer sacrifice to God, and Pharaoh refused, saying, "Go ye, sacrifice to your God in the land." Moses said, "It is not meet so to do, for we shall sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians to the Lord our God: Lo, shall we sacrifice the abomination of the Egyptians before their eyes, and will they not stone us?"

Indeed, all the ceremonies of the Mosaic law had either a direct or indirect reference to some sinful and idolatrous practice of the surrounding heathen nations, against which it was important that Israel should be guarded,—while they indicated also the purity of character which the Hebrews should maintain. And he who is well informed concerning the state of the Hebrews, and of the world, in those early days,—and who considers that it is suitable to the dignity of God to employ means adapted to circumstances, and to the appointed ends,—will perceive that the first covenant was perfectly fitted to the use it was designed for, in the particular which has now been noticed.

In the second place, the first covenant was not faulty, in respect to its adaptedness to its intended use, as preparatory to the introduction of the new and better covenant. It was designed to keep up a broad line of distinction between the Jews and the idolatrous heathen nations, so as to make that nation a repository of a series of teachings and prophesies, pointing to the coming Messiah, and preparing for the introduction and

establishment of his more perfect, or, rather, *most* perfect system of religion. In this respect the law is, as St. Paul said, "our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ."

In what respect, then, was that first covenant faulty? It was faulty in that it was not adapted for the accomplishment of *all* that for mankind, which God designed by *some* means to do for them. St. Paul was here reasoning with the Hebrews, some of whom, it appears, had imbibed the opinion that the whole Mosaic institution was designed to be confirmed and perpetuated under the reign of the Messiah. He aimed to show them that the Mosaic dispensation, though good in its place, must be seen to be faulty at once, when proposed as a perpetual institution for all nations and all ages. And he urged upon them the self-evident fact, that if that covenant had not been faulty in this respect,—if it had been fitted to answer all the purpose of good for mankind which God had designed for them,—then there should have been no place for a second covenant; and he referred them to the prophet Jeremiah, who prophesied, saying, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah; *not* according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt."

Accordingly, that first covenant was faulty, in that it was not fitted to the *completion* of God's *perfect* work of good for mankind. It was designed for the temporary use of a particular people; the blessings which it promised were of a temporal nature; and its promises were *conditional*, the bestowment of them

being uncertain according to the uncertainty of the creature's faithfulness.

2d. In the second place I will point out the specific difference of the *second* covenant. This our apostle in the context pronounces a *better covenant*, established on *better promises*. Wherein is it better?

First; it is better, because it engages the bestowment of better things. Now the word *covenant* signifies a testament, a contract, or an agreement. It may be an agreement mutually entered into by two parties, its performance depending equally on both. Or it may be an engagement which one party takes on itself, unconditionally to perform for the benefit of the other. This second covenant is an engagement which God has made, of his own free grace, to bestow *spiritual* and *immortal good* on the human race. Hence it is said of the *gospel*, which is the *revelation* of this better covenant, testament, or engagement of the Lord, that *life and immortality* are brought to light by it.

Secondly; this second covenant is better, and established on better promises, in that its promises are *unconditional*. This is a conspicuous difference which was pointed out by the prophet, whom the apostle quotes in the case before us. "I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah, not according to the covenant which I made with their fathers, because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord." Here the fact is noted, that even the temporal blessings which were proposed to the people by that first covenant, were not always enjoyed by them, because the blessings were proposed on conditions which they failed to perform. And the circumstance that the people failed of enjoying even the full blessings proposed by the first

covenant, through their own fallibility,—this circumstance, I say, being offered by Jehovah as an important reason why he would secure those better blessings which he designed for them, by a covenant not like the former, certainly directs our attention to the article of *conditionality*, as the point of difference specially referred to in this place. It notifies us that the new covenant should not be subject to any faultiness or failure, in regard to the final communication of its promised blessings to mankind, *through their not walking in it.* And the fact of which we are hereby notified, is clearly seen in the terms of the covenant itself, which here follows: "For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel, after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws in their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest; for I will be merciful to their unrighteousness; and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."

It is hence made to appear, beyond controversy, that this new covenant is an unconditional engagement which God has made, of himself, in his own free grace, to confer the needed benefit of salvation on his moral creatures. God here publishes his positive engagement of what *he* will do, or will bring his creatures to be and to do.

But I will caution my readers, that none of you leave this subject, with the impression, that this new covenant engages to bless mankind *in their sins.* It recognizes the necessity of your being holy in order to be *happy*, as much as the law does. But the difference

is in this,—that while the law commands men to be holy, but is not an engagement to make them so, the new covenant is the free testament of God, whereby he engages to employ and direct means to make men holy. It has been shown that, of the Mediator, or Executor of this new and better covenant, God's angel said, "He shall save his people from their sins." "For this purpose was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil," and "reconcile all things unto himself." To inquire, therefore, by way of objection, whether men can be saved, if they will never love God, and be holy, would only be to inquire, whether men can be saved, if God should not, according to the better promises of his better covenant, save them? We have only to answer, in the words of the apostle, *Let God be true.*

But it is the wonder of the world,—a stumbling-block to the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness,—that GOD should institute a purpose and prosecute a government, in relation to the future character and condition of moral accountable beings. "Surely," it is objected, "God will not force sinners to be saved, whether they will or not!" No, no; there is no such absurdity in the Divine system of operation. The Creator of the physical world is also the Author of the human *mind.* It is his workmanship. Its *moral agency* is his workmanship. It is "a wheel within a wheel," placed there by the Author, not to defeat his design in the whole, but to promote his benevolent plan. Man could not be man,—he could not become the holy, happy being intended, without this accountable agency. But the Creator of mind perfectly well knows his work. He knows its spring of action, and by what influences its motions may be governed. And He who rolls the

spheres in their orbits, and who governs the "free winds," by touching the causes that regulate their motions, can also accomplish his great purpose, in the *universe of mind*, without violence to the established moral principles and laws.

When God has revealed to men his laws of commandment, touching their moral duty, they have often transgressed, and subjected themselves to the consequent punishment. But when he has revealed any purpose of his own, even relating to the character and condition of moral agents, such purpose has never failed. He said long beforehand to Abraham, "Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs; and they shall afflict them four hundred years. And that nation whom they shall serve will I judge; and afterwards shall they come out with great substance."[a] There were thousands of free moral agencies (using the word free for voluntary) connected with these events. Unbelief would ask, "what *if* the people would not go into the strange land referred to? Or, if they should go there, what *if* the authorities of that land would never afflict them? They will not afflict them unless they are disposed to do so; and what *if* they should not indulge that disposition? Or, if they should afflict them, what *if* the Hebrews would not consent to go out?" Such, I say, would be the language of unbelief. Such are the inquiries, or rather arguments, by which we are often met in our christian labors. We present the word of God affirming his purpose of grace in Christ; and the objector arrays his army of *ifs* against us. "What *if* the people will never consent to this revealed arrangement of Jehovah?"

[a] Gen. xv. 13, 14.

But had Abraham any misgivings here? No. Abraham *believed God*, and it was counted unto him for righteousness."[o] And how was the event? In due time God, in his providence, brought about such circumstances affecting Abraham's progeny, that they saw it to be their life to go down into Egypt. A desolating dearth prevailed in Canaan; a message was received through Joseph, from the sovereign of Egypt, bidding them welcome to the best of the land of plenty; and they consented, they chose, they desired to go there. When they had abode there for a season, and Joseph and Pharaoh were dead, and another king arose who knew not Joseph, he looked with jealousy on their growth and enterprise, and fearing their rivalry, he oppressed them with burdens. In this he deliberately acted his own choice, believing he might, by oppression, dwarf their energies, and hold them in servitude. But at length their burdens became intolerable, and they sighed for freedom. The Lord raised them up a leader, and opened a way before them; and they went out with a desiring mind, and with much substance.

Thus all these events, with which so many thousands of moral agencies were connected, transpired with the voluntary action of those accountable agents, —and also according to the Divine arrangement made known to Abraham hundreds of years before!

Saul of Tarsus is an instructive illustration of this important principle. He was raving on his way, in the spirit of war and violence against the cause of Christ. Jesus met him, and at the light of his glory the persecutor fell upon the ground. He was put upon his reflections by the majestic voice of love, "Saul, Saul,

[o] Rom. iv. 3.

why persecutest thou me?" "Who art thou, Lord?" the Pharisee inquired. "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Here he is—not forced, whether he will or not,—but *desiring* to serve the Lord Jesus Christ. And Jesus said to him at the time, "I have appeared unto thee for this purpose." What! a *purpose* to accomplish on a free moral agent? Yes,—"I have appeared unto thee for this *purpose*." And what is the purpose? "To make thee a minister and a witness of me." [p] What an instrument was he, all in his mad career, with intent to exterminate the christian cause from earth, for Jesus to select, and meet there upon the way, to change into a cheerful and loving minister of his truth! It was the gnarliest stick in the moral wilderness, that Jesus chose, to work up, that very day, into the beautiful spiritual temple. Did he succeed? He did so. With all the ease with which the rising beams of the morning dispel the dark shades of night, did the sweet light of Jesus dispel the darkness of that madman's soul, and enlist his moral affections into his love and service.

And when, in the fulness of times foretold, the face of the covering shall be taken away from over all people, and the sweet light of heavenly truth and love shall shine into every mind,—then, because they *are* free moral agents, and *will* love what appears to them supremely lovely, and nothing in the universe can hinder it, will they all love and adore the eternal Father, "and enjoy him forever."

Such, then, is the purpose of the Saviour's mission, and the harmony of its operation with the constitution

[p] Acts xxvi. 4—20.

and laws of our moral being. We see in it the perfect and unfailing wisdom and ability of God;—

> "From seeming evil still educing good,
> And better thence again, and better still,
> In infinite progression."

## OBJECTIONS.

1st. But it is objected, that salvation is sometimes represented in the Scriptures as a reward, to be bestowed on the condition of faith in the gospel. Jesus, for instance, in his last commission to his apostles before his ascension, said unto them, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."[q] This latter clause has been taken by some to declare the very gospel itself which the disciples should preach. The passage has been quoted, even by some learned men, in the following manner:—"Jesus said unto his disciples, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, saying, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.'" But if the saying, "He that believeth shall be saved"—is the gospel which was to be preached, may we not ask, he that believeth *what? What is it*, by the belief of which we shall be saved, and for the disbelief of which we shall be condemned? It is the gospel. And what is the gospel? Those just referred to would answer, "It is this: 'He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.'" We repeat the inquiry, He that believeth *what?*

[q] Mark xvi. 15, 16.

Suppose I enter a room, in which are assembled a company of my readers, and say to you, "I come to communicate important tidings." Turning with eager desire, you ask with one accord, "What is the news?" I gravely answer, "Those of you who believe it, shall receive a signal favor, and those who believe not shall suffer deprivation." "Those who believe *what?*" you would ask with emphasis. And if I were to continue reiterating the same answer, you would take me for either a trifler or a madman. I should first communicate the proposed tidings, the truth to be believed; and then it would be in season to talk of the effects of your believing or not believing.

So in the case before us. The Saviour did not, in this instance, make a statement to the disciples of what the gospel was. They had been with him from the time when he called them to his service, and had learned of him the subject matter of his gospel mission; and he promised to send them the Holy Spirit, to farther lead them into all truth. He had told them before, not to go in the way of the Gentiles, but only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But now he had "offered himself once for all," and broken down the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles; and he enlarged the sphere of their ministry, saying, "Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel, (the glad tidings of truth into which I have taught you,) *to every creature.*" And then he proceeds, not to instruct them again into the revelations of that gospel which they were to preach, but to describe the consequences which should result to the people, accordingly as they should treat the apostolic message. "He that believeth shall be saved." That is, the true believer should enjoy, as the legitimate fruit of his

faith, salvation from the moral darkness, the hopelessness, the guilt, the fears, and all the evils of an unbelieving and sinful state; while the unbeliever should remain, as a prisoner under condemnation, in the suffering of all those evils.

This sense of the Saviour's use of the word *saved*, in the foregoing case, is beautifully explained by St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians. He was an unbeliever for a long time after the date of this declaration of Jesus, "He that believeth not shall be damned." At length he received the gospel by a living faith, and became a faithful teacher of it. When he had, by his personal ministry, established a church of believers in Corinth, he heard of some misunderstanding among them on certain essential points of Christian doctrine, especially that of the resurrection. Therefore he wrote them letters on the gospel theme, and other matters of interest to them. In his first letter he says,—"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; by which also ye *are saved*, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain."[x] How completely this explains and confirms the saying of Jesus, when he commissioned his disciples to go out and preach the gospel, that they who would receive their message, *should be saved* in their faith. The brethren whom the apostle addressed had believed the gospel, and they *were saved*, by the legitimate influence of the gospel upon their minds.

So, then, the gospel is not a declaration of the fruits of faith and unbelief, but it is the revelation of the truth to be believed. It is the subject matter upon

[x] 1 Cor. xv. 1, 2.

which for faith to act. Consequently, it is not made true by the belief, nor false by the disbelief of man. It is, as we have most clearly exhibited in the course of this chapter, the revelation of that grand and stupendous purpose of grace in the moral system of God's creation, which shall work, and overturn, and reform, until the last vestige of unbelief itself shall be overcome, and the light and spirit of God shall be all in all. Of this revealed plan the apostle says, "But what if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith (the promise) of God without effect? God forbid."[s] But unbelief shuts man out of the enjoyment of the truth, while he abides in it. For so it is written, "He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."[t] The wrath of God is the condemnatory operation of his law upon transgressors, under the action of which St. Paul had his part, when he was among those who were "children of wrath, even as others."[u] Again, "He that believeth on him is not condemned; (the same in the original as the word *damned* in the other passage;) but he that believeth not is condemned (*damned*) already.—And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men have loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil."[v] But "he that receiveth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."[w]

There is a marked distinction kept up throughout the Scriptures, as there is such distinction in fact, between the character and condition of the virtuous

[s] Rom. iii. 3, 4. [t] John iii. 36. [u] Eph. ii. 3.
[v] John iii. 18, 19. [w] John v. 24.

and vicious, the believer and the disbeliever. While the wages of sin is death, the fruit of faith and obedience is life, salvation and peace. But there is not the least shade of discrepancy between this Scriptural and experimental fact, and the triumphant faith of God's purpose in Christ, to win the hearts and affections of his great family to himself.

2d. Again, it is objected, "that all men are not reconciled to God in the present life; many die in impenitence; and we have no ground to hope for the enlightenment of the blind, the instruction of the ignorant, and the renovation of the sinful, in the future life."

This objection is founded on the prevailing sentiment, that this mortal life is distinctly and peculiarly a day of probation for eternity; and that the eternal states of all the human race are to be decided by the characters formed in time. But there is not the slightest foundation in the Scriptures for such a sentiment, and nothing could be more absurd in the eye of reason. Elevate yourself in thought to some lofty position, from which you can view the entire face of the globe. Look, then, with a searching and contemplative eye, upon the whole human race in this mortal state of being. See, in one section, tribes ushered into being under circumstances of the most utter destitution of moral advantages, opening their eyes from infancy upon the most low and degrading idolatries, and growing up under the influence of examples the most corrupt and debasing. In another place the child is surrounded with circumstances of favor, and is trained up by the precepts and examples of virtue and truth. And look; there are tens, hundreds, and millions, of tender infants, whose life passeth away as the dew of the morn-

ing, and they tarry not to do good or evil. They have formed no character here—and shall they have none in eternity? They have deserved neither reward nor punishment; and shall they, therefore, neither enjoy good nor suffer evil in eternity? If you say they shall be eternally blessed by the good favor of God, you explode your doctrine, as applied to more than one half of the human race, of making the mortal life a state of probation for the rewards of eternity.—And look! There is a beautiful little lad, whose filial love and cheerful smiles delight the fond hearts of his doating parents. Yesterday, he attained to an accountable age in the moral government of God. To-day he has committed some juvenile error; and now, the furious steed tramples over him, and the wheel crushes him. He expires. Must eternity be to him an inheritance of wailing and sorrow?—But yonder is a different scene. A youth is treading the paths of vice and folly. He slights all the counsels of wisdom, scorns reproof, and sinks deeper and deeper into moral defilement. He advances in age and in sin, until he is old and grey in years. At length he becomes guilty of crimes the very thought of which alarms him; he is brought to reflection and repentance, and soon drops into the grave. Shall he claim an eternity of bliss on the score of reward for his earthly deeds?—In short, when you take this comprehensive view of the case of man on earth, noting the various terms of time which are allotted to this mortal life, from a moment to a hundred years,—and the different circumstances under which they live, including every grade of privilege, from the most advantageous to almost none, or even to the most pernicious precepts and examples,—and *also the* variety of temperaments, and passions, and

cerebral conformations for the development of mind, —what, to reason's eye, could appear more preposterous, than the position that *this* is the state, and the *only* state, which the great and wise Father of all has appropriated to his children, to form characters for eternity? It is impossible.

In saying this, we speak with reverence for the Scriptures, as well as for common sense. For the objectionable sentiment is no less repugnant to the inspired word of truth. There were a few fabricated texts of Scripture formerly applied to this subject, which are now out of date. One of these was made to say, "There is no repentance beyond the grave;" and another, "As death leaves us so judgment will find us." The first is a glossary on the words of Solomon, (Eccl. ix. 10,) "For there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, (hades) whither thou goest." This is an expression of the silence and inactivity of *hades*, the state of the dead; but it has no reference to the condition of that immortal life which is brought to light through the gospel. Surely he did not mean that there will be no knowledge nor wisdom in that blest world. The other passage, "As death leaves us so judgment will find us," was conceived, we know not how, as an idea belonging to the words of the same writer, in Eccl. xi. 3; "If the tree fall towards the south, or towards the north, in the place where the tree falleth, there it shall be." But no ingenuity can show the application of this language to the future life of man. If you insist on applying the fall of the tree to the death of man, you will make the saying, "*in the place* where it falleth *there it shall be*," to deny the resur-

rection. But these words of Solomon had no such reference.

And now, I ask, what reason have any to assume, that the eternal state of existence is a mere monotony? that passing out of this momentary, infantile state, into one immortal, undying, men pass beyond the bounds of intellectual and moral improvement? We urge the inquiry, Where is the authority for so undivine, and unphilosophical an assumption? And echo answers, "Where?"

Will not mankind be moral beings in the future world? Will they not be possessed of moral powers and perceptions, of capacities to judge between right and wrong, and to appreciate the difference between them? If not, then they cannot be subjects of condemnation there. The improved theology of orthodox schools, makes the punishment of the future world to consist in guilt, remorse, and shame, on account of sins committed on earth. Then the subjects of such punishment will be moral beings, capable of repentance and moral reform. If they suffer guilt, shame, and regret, for having sinned against their heavenly Father, then there is a principle in their moral natures at war with sin, and capable of loving and choosing holiness. If they were possessed of natures radically evil, utterly opposed to God, like that of fabled demons, loving all evil and hating all good,—with such natures they would not suffer shame or regret for their sins. If their recollection of the past should trouble them at all, it would be that they had not sinned more inveterately here, against the God they hate so radically there.

Hence it is seen, that for the very purpose of creating a future hell for sinners, the schools have indued

it with principles which shall work its destruction. For if man possesses such a moral nature, that, away from temptations to other wrongs, he so truly appreciates the right, as to be ashamed of the wrong, and filled with regret for past sins, he will certainly reject the wrong, and love and choose the right.

And this is not only the philosophy, the principles of which have found way into the scholastic creeds, but it is *Christian* philosophy. God will not clothe men with his own immortality, and crown them with his eternity, for a vain and useless purpose. When they are raised into a spiritual, immortal state, their circumstances will be, of necessity, far more advantageous for moral improvement, than in the present life. They will be freed, to say the least, from a large share of the temptations and mistakes of the present mortal world,—their organization will be more perfect,—they will be free from those sicknesses and wants which were the cause of much unreconciliation here,—and they will bear with them, in the very fact of the resurrection life, demonstrative proof of glorious truths, touching the existence, and perfections, and government, and purposes of God, which their gross perceptions did not grasp in their earthly house of clay.

And there, too, will Jesus be found, the Resurrection and the Life. The testimonies of his mission limit not his work to the mortal hour of human being. He is to prosecute his work to its accomplishment, *in the dispensation of the fulness of times.* And he is to gather together into the harmony of his own spirit, and reconcile to God, all things, whether now living or dead, whether above the earth, on the earth, or under it. Then will he see of the travail of his soul

and be satisfied. Then, in the full triumph of that love which sustained him, when he tasted death for every man, his ransomed possession, beatified and blessed, will he present before his Father and our Father, his God and our God, saying, "Behold I, and the children which thou gavest me."[x]

[x] Heb. ii. 13.

# CHAPTER X.

## THE CHRIST OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, THE MESSIAH OF THE OLD.

When Philip had become a follower of the Son of Mary, he found Nathanael, and said unto him, "*We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write.*"[a] We have already treated somewhat largely on the person, the character, and the mission of Christ. And it was meet that we should do so, for CHRIST IS CHRISTIANITY, and Christianity is our hope. And now I propose to present the relation of Jesus to the ancient prophecies, as an invaluable species of *evidence* for the *truth of Christianity*.

I. That the Jews had among them a long succession of reputed prophets, it would be a work of supererogation for me to argue. I am not aware that this is a disputed matter. The fact is everywhere visible upon the face of the Scriptures, which are the accredited records of the Jewish nation. Nor does it appear to be any less obvious, that these reputed prophets prophesied of the coming of an important personage, called the Messiah, and peculiarly the Sent of God. Different appellations, however, in the course of these prophecies, are ascribed to the expected One,—and the descriptions of character vary in verbal expressions, according to the different names under which he is presented.

Moses prophesied of the One who was to come, in the following terms;—"The Lord thy God will raise

[a] John i. 45.

up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me: unto him shall ye hearken."[b] The prophet here promised was not Joshua, Moses' successor in office; for the historian who finished out the book of Deuteronomy after Moses' death, speaks of Joshua, and writes as a witness of his acts; but he adds, "And there arose not a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face."[c] (The saying that the Lord knew Moses face to face, simply denotes that he granted to him the favor of a free and familiar intercourse, for the purposes of his calling.) Neither was this promised teacher either of the other prophets that came under the Old Testament dispensation. They all pointed on, beyond themselves, to the great Prophet and Teacher, Prince and Deliverer, that was to come. It was with regard to them, as it was said of John the Baptist, "He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light." None of these prophets claimed to be the Messiah, but they all spake of him as being yet to come after them.

The prophet Isaiah said much of the promised Prince of peace, and of his blessed reign. And his descriptions abound with surpassing eloquence. As an example, we will repeat one of the passages which were quoted on the subject of the Messiah's *judgment*. "There shall come forth a Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots: and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of knowledge, and of the fear of the Lord; and shall make him quick of understanding in the fear of the Lord. And he shall not judge after the sight of his eyes, neither re-

[b] Deut. xviii. 15. [c] Deut. xxxiv. 10.

prove after the hearing of his ears; but with righteousness shall he judge the poor, and reprove with equity for the meek of the earth. And he shall smite the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked. And righteousness shall be the girdle of his loins, and faithfulness the girdle of his reins. The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. * * And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, which shall stand for an ensign of the people; to it shall the Gentiles seek, and his rest shall be glorious."[d]

It must, I think, be obvious to every mind, that this prophecy describes something more than a prophet and teacher like those who were then addressing the people,—and one very unlike any of the conquerors whom the world had known. It describes one who was, like Moses, to combine the character of prophet and teacher, with that of lawgiver, ruler and judge. And he was to be a *spiritual*, not a secular ruler. For it was to be with the *rod of his mouth*, and with the *breath of his lips*, that he was to smite and slay the wicked. This denotes his *moral* power, the successful workings of his *spirit of truth*. He was to be a spiritual King, and to establish a spiritual kingdom. And the benefits of this kingdom were to extend unto all nations, Gentiles as well as Jews.

Such prophecies are not the inventions of those Jewish leaders who spake them. They bear no resemblance to the proud, selfish, partial, national Jewish spirit. Though uttered by Jews, they are seen to be the breathings of that wisdom of God, "which is

[d] Isa. xi. 1—10.

full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy." They describe a Messiah, to be alike the Friend and Deliverer, the Salvation and Glory, of Gentiles and Jews. This is a remarkable characteristic of all the Scripture prophecies of Christ, and a strong internal evidence that they are not Jewish forgeries, but the teachings of Him who is the God of all.

II. But it is the more particular design of the present chapter, to elucidate the fact that *the Christ of the New Testament is this promised Messiah of the Old.* And in the prosecution of this design, we shall simultaneously carry out the subject of the foregoing remarks, the looking forward of the prophets to the ONE who was to come.

1st. The *time of his coming* is that which had been variously designated by Moses and the prophets. This time had been described, both by the numbering of the intervening periods, and by connecting it with a variety of other great events; events, the simultaneous occurrence of which it would be the weakest credulity to admit that human sagacity could have foreseen, and imagination have conceived of.

There is a wonderful designation of the time of Christ's coming, by description of the intervening periods of time between it and another event, as recorded by the prophet Daniel.* "From the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem, unto the Messiah, the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and three-score and two weeks;" i. e. sixty-nine weeks. And then there was to be one week in which for him to finish his work; making in all seventy weeks, to "finish the transgression, and

* Dan. ix. 24—27.

make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity,—and to anoint the most Holy;"—or, in other words, for sealing and establishing that covenant as a moral system, which, by its efficient energies, shall make an end of evil.

With regard to the reckoning of prophetic time, I adopt no enigmatical rule. I receive the record of time by the prophets as by other writers, days for days, and weeks for weeks, unless in any particular case they inform me that they use one period as the sign of another. And so I understand this seventy weeks, taking the word weeks as it is in the original, where it is *sevens*. It is not the word which is used for weeks, but it is literally sevens. "Seventy *sevens* are determined upon thy people." Now to take this in its most literal sense, we must understand the word *sevens* to apply to the most noted and natural divisions of time, especially when mentioned in reference to great and important events. Such most noted and natural divisions are *years*. Each one of each of the *sevens*, being taken for a year, it is seventy sevens of years, or four hundred and ninety years. And according to the accepted chronology, which cannot be far from the truth, Jesus Christ was offered upon the cross, and thus made a sin-offering once for all, superseding the necessity of the daily sacrifices, *in just four hundred and ninety* years from the date of Artaxerxes' commandment to Ezra, for the completing and beautifying of the temple, the reëstablishment of the service of God, and the more perfect restoration of Jerusalem. There were other edicts, which had more particular reference to the rebuilding of the walls, &c. of the city; but as this last, by Artaxerxes, related to the completion of the work and the full restoration of Jerusalem to its

religious privileges and blessings, the prophetic reference in this case is sufficiently applicable.

This is an agreement, with wonderful exactness of time, between the event and the prophecy. But more wonderful, if possible, is the agreement in those cases where the time of Messiah's coming is described by its connexion with other important, and in some instances improbable events. Moses said, "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be." The word *Shiloh* signifies *the Sent of God.* This prophecy foretells the continuance of regal authority in the tribe of Judah, until the Sent of God should come; and involves the facts of the loss of this authority to Judah, and the coming of Shiloh, as simultaneous events. And it was so, taking Jesus for the promised Shiloh. Judea was made a Roman province about eleven years after the birth of Christ. Still some judicial authority was left among them in relation to some of their domestic concerns. But in the year 70, at an event by which the cause of Christ was more generally, and permanently established in the world, and which was called "*the coming of Christ in his kingdom,*"[1] then the power of that people was utterly scattered, and the distinctness of the tribe of Judah was lost. So then the sceptre did remain with Judah until *Jesus* came; and then Judah fell. Is not Jesus then the promised Shiloh?

Again, it was foretold by the prophet Daniel, (chap. ii.) that, succeeding the then present Chaldean monarchy, there would be three universal monarchies, making in all, four;—and that in the time of the fourth and last universal earthly monarchy, the God

[1] Matt. xvi. 27, 28.

of heaven would set up a kingdom which should never be destroyed. It will not be disputed that this indestructible kingdom is the kingdom of the promised Messiah, who was to reign in righteousness, and of the increase of whose government and peace there should be no end. The setting up of his kingdom was of course to be at his coming; and this was to be in the time of the fourth universal monarchy. The Roman kingdom was the fourth universal monarchy on the earth, and probably the last; for it does not appear likely that there will ever be another. And it was in the time of the Roman monarchy, when Cæsar Augustus was Emperor, that Jesus was born into the world. Is not Jesus, then, the incumbent of the throne of that kingdom, which the God of heaven should set up in the time of the fourth universal monarchy?

Again, with respect to the time of the promised Messiah, who should, by the virtues of his kingdom, constitute the proper Desire of all nations, Haggai prophesied (chap. ii.) that he should come while the second temple in Jerusalem should be standing, when that house should be filled with glory. Jesus did come, and teach in that temple his glorious truth. But that temple is now demolished; the very foundations thereof have been ploughed up, and a Turkish mosque is reared on its ruins. Is not Jesus, then, that Desire of all nations, who should visit that second temple before its dissolution?

I might pursue this subdivision of my subject, but should exceed my limits. And enough has now been presented to show conclusively, that the time of Jesus' coming, is the time which the prophets had designated for the coming of the expected Messiah. The further you carry the examination of this depart-

ment of the evidence of Christian truth, the more interesting it becomes. The great variety of ways whereby this time was designated, makes an examination of the subject the more satisfactory. It was to be in 490 years from the going forth of the commandment to rebuild Jerusalem;—it was to be about the time when the sceptre should depart from Judah; it was to be in the time of the fourth and last universal earthly monarchy; it was to be while the second temple in Jerusalem should be standing. And at the point of time where all these events and circumstances, which the prophets had foretold, not only at sundry times, but in such diverse manners, and on such various occasions, as evince that they were not copying each other; I say, at the point of time where all these events and circumstances converge and centre, *Christ Jesus came into the world.* And such was the understanding of the prophets by the Jews themselves, that they were looking for their Messiah to come about that time. When they were suffering their tribulations in that same age, they were easily induced to follow almost any artful impostor who rose up pretending to be the Messiah. But the claims of all these pretenders were exploded, almost as soon as they were put forth. Not so with Jesus. He came at the time appointed; and his name is enduring as the sun. *Is not this the Christ?*

2d. The Christ of the New Testament, who came at the designated *time*, appears also in the *personal character* ascribed to the expected Messiah by the prophets. Unlike the character which the sentiments of the world would associate with princely greatness in a royal personage, the Messiah was to come, though in a glory surpassing that of all the kings of the earth, yet in

meekness and lowliness, humility and love. His greatness was to be a moral greatness; his glory was to be the splendor of his doctrines, the majesty of his goodness. For a sublime description of this trait in his character and mission, listen to another passage from the evangelical prophet. "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground, he hath no form nor comeliness. * * He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. * * He was cut off out of the land of the living, for the transgression of my people was he stricken. He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. When thou shalt make his soul (his life) an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify (the) many; for he shall bear their iniquities."[s]

[s] Isa. liii.

So precisely does this prophecy describe the character which Jesus did indeed bear, that if we had not the indubitable evidence that this was published hundreds of years before the coming of Christ, we might reasonably have indulged the suspicion that it was a narrative written after the fact.

His being said to be *without form or comeliness*, does not refer to bodily deformity, but to the meanness of his birth, the humbleness of his life, and the character of his teachings,—all being unlike that which would attract the gaze and admiration of the world.

He was a *man of sorrows and acquainted with griefs*, bearing *our* griefs and carrying *our* sorrows. The wanderings and the sufferings of mankind were observed and felt by him. He wept with the weeping, and mourned with the sorrowful, and had compassion on the ignorant and on them who were out of the way. "When John, being cast into prison, heard of the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and asked him, saying, Art thou he that should come? or do we look for another? Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John those things which ye do hear and see; how that the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk; the deaf hear, and the lepers are cleansed; the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached unto them."[h] This answers to the prophetic description, which Jesus read in the meeting of Jewish priests and people in the synagogue of Nazareth, and applied to himself: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovery of sight to the

[h] Matt. xi. 2—5.

blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord."[1]

It is recorded in the 8th of Matthew, that "they brought unto him many that were possessed of demons; and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed them that were sick; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Surely then he bore the griefs and carried the sorrows of men. And though he was "despised and rejected of men," who hunted him as beasts of prey, for his life, yet he was gentle and forgiving, and his tears flowed in sympathy even for the sufferings of his enemies. "When he was reviled he reviled not again; when he suffered he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously."

Thus while Jesus taught the doctrine of forgiveness and love, overcoming cruelty with kindness, and evil with good, he faithfully and constantly practised the same. And when he had spent his allotted time on earth in labors of love, and was seized by a band of ruffians, dragged to a mock trial, and adjudged to a shameful death, he was still meek and forbearing. And knowing the fixed intent of his persecutors, and that any argument of his in support of his divine commission would be seized and bandied by them as proof of his blasphemy, he was passive in their hands, and contradicted not their falsehoods. Herein was fulfilled the prophetic saying before quoted, "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth."

[1] Luke iv. 16—22.

This prophecy goes on to show that the promised One whom it describes would be put to death by the wickedness of his persecutors; being taken from prison and from judgment, and cut off from the land of the living, because he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth,—and being smitten for the transgressions of the people. And when his life should have been made an offering for sin, he was to live again; for he was then to see his seed, prolong his days, or his existence, and the pleasure of the Lord should prosper in his hand.

All these things were foretold of the Messiah of the prophets; and they were fulfilled in the Christ Jesus of the New Testament. And see, on the cross, how he carried out the principles of love, unconquerable love, which he taught and practised in his life. He was surrounded by his murderers, who were deriding him in his agonies inflicted by themselves; and yet he lifted his eyes and his voice to the King eternal, and in the majesty of his love he cried,—"Father, forgive them."

Then this mighty Prince of peace, when he had prayed for his persecutors, and commended his spirit to the Father, meekly bowed his head and died. He was laid in a new tomb; and the chief priests and Pharisees, recollecting that he had said he should rise from the dead on the third day, went to Pilate, and procured a strong guard to be placed upon the sepulchre, that the disciples might not steal away his body, and report that he had risen. But on the morning of the third day from his crucifixion, Jesus arose from the state of death, and showed himself unto his disciples. He tarried with them a sufficient length of time to confirm to them the truth of his resurrection, and to

order and establish the affairs of his spiritual kingdom, and he was then borne hence into the invisible world, to reign in his mediatorial kingdom, *until all things should be subdued unto him*, or, as the prophet's language has it, until *he shall see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied.*

I might multiply the comparisons on this point to a much greater extent,—the comparisons, I mean, between the prophecies of the Old Testament and the history of the New. But the fact shines clearly in what has now been presented, that the Christ of the New Testament, who came at the designated *time*, appears also in the *personal character* ascribed to the expected Messiah by the prophets. And my closing remarks under this head, have also run into an observation of the fulfilment of the prophecies concerning the death and the resurrection of the promised One, in what actually took place with the blessed Son of Mary.

3d. There is a third view in which the Christ of the New Testament is seen to be the Messiah of the Old, viz., in his *official character.* The promised Messiah of Moses and the prophets was to bruise the serpent's head, or make an end of the evil unto which the human race have become subject; he was to make blessed all nations and families of the earth; he was to be a commissioned servant of God, endowed with his spirit, to be light to the blind, deliverance to the captives, salvation to the Gentiles, and the redemption and glory of Israel. He was to subdue the wicked with the breath of his lips and the rod of his mouth,—the word of his truth and grace. He was to be emphatically the *Prince of peace;* and of the increase of his government and peace there was to be no end. Or, in other words, it should extend, until it should en-

circle all. For there was to be given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all nations and kindreds should serve him; and his kingdom should never be destroyed, nor his dominion have an end.[j] And as he was to be a sin offering for those whom he should subdue and redeem, it was said by the prophet that he should *bear the iniquities of us all.*

In the same official character, or characters rather, is Jesus presented in the New Testament. As a *priest* he is said to have made a sin-offering for the people; "not by the blood of bulls and of goats, but by his own blood, he hath entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."[k] "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory, and honor, that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." "And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world."[l]

As a King, "He is exalted far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."[m] "God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."[n] "For he must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet. Then will he deliver

[j] Dan. vii. 13, 14. [k] Heb. ix. 12. [l] 1 John ii. 2.
[m] Eph. i. 20, 21. [n] Phil. ii. 9—11.

up the kingdom to the Father, having put down all rule and all authority and power. And the last enemy shall be destroyed, (which is) death." °

How instructive is the study of the sacred Volume! How rich is the knowledge it yields! When we pore over the statutes, and the histories, and the diversified teachings, of the ancient chosen people, and see interspersed, at sundry times and in divers manners, the sweet prophetic breathings of promise and hope for the perfect One to come, the creation's Desire; and then we turn our minds to the history of Jesus, the Christian's chosen Master,—our glad hearts leap up, and we exclaim in the language of the admiring Philip, "*We have found him of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write.*"

° 1 Cor. xv. 24—26.

## CHAPTER XI.

### TRUTH OF THE GOSPEL HISTORY.

THE truth of Christianity, as a revealed system of religious hope, is involved in the truth of the Evangelical history. This history records the life, the superhuman works, and the death of Jesus Christ, and his resurrection from the dead as the first fruits of them that slept, the hope of human kind. Give to this history, or to all there is peculiar to it, the character of legends and forgeries,—and you relinquish all tangible hold upon Christianity as such, and draw again over our mortal vision, the impenetrable vail of heathen darkness. With all that candor, then, which becometh children, made after the image of God, we will inquire into the credibility of the Gospel Records, and truth of the Christian system.

I. And here in the outset we will premise, that the truth of Christianity is in the nature of things probable. We are not, therefore, to be predisposed to discredit good evidence in its favor. We are rather to prepare our minds for giving all evidence its due weight, in the spirit of St. Paul's appeal for the witnesses of Jesus, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you that God should raise the dead?"

When we consider man, his intellectual powers and faculties, whereby he calculates and weighs causes and effects, beholds the beauty of order, and traces the footsteps of design in all the works of nature, visits the revolving planets, strides among the stars, and beholding all above, beneath and around, admires the wisdom,

and adores the benevolence of the Creator, and claims to him the high relationship of *children*,—we are incited to inquire;—just as he begins to be,—just as he begins to look around,—just as he begins to soar,—and has tasted enough of life and knowledge to make him pant for more,—must he fall back into nonentity? Must he be plunged into eternal night? Most gloomy thought! And a thought as *unreasonable* as it is gloomy.

It is unreasonable to suppose that the infinitely wise and benevolent Creator has so constituted any grade of creatures, as that they shall possess important, even *constitutional* wants, infinitely beyond what he has made provision to meet. The wisdom and perfection of God's works in creation and providence, consist in the correspondence and harmony of all its parts, and the exact adaptation of everything to its proper end. If you look into the brute creation, you will see the form of the body, limbs, claw, tooth or beak, of every animal, exactly adapted to the procuring of that kind of food which its nature requires, and not a constitutional want but what finds a provision made to meet it. And it is fair to conclude, that, if the all-wise Creator had designed to limit the whole sphere of *man's* existence to a few moments here on earth, he would have given him such a constitution of mind as well as body, as that the productions of the earth would yield him satisfaction. He would not have made us so, that when we have health of body, and all riches and comforts which earth affords, we should feel an aching void within the breast, unsatisfied and unfilled,—an earnest reaching forward for lasting good to come, which never can be met but by a hope of immortality.

Again, when you look into the natural world, you see everything, every species of brutes and plants, come up to a state of maturity. Every species, as a whole, seems to answer its destined end. The tender plant comes up, until it becomes a perfect herb or tree, according to its kind. Nothing can be discovered in its structure, which shows it to tend to any higher state, or bespeaks a design for any higher end than it fully answers here. Not so with man. Consider him as an intellectual being. Consider his ability and disposition to acquire knowledge, and his growing thirst for it as he advances in it. And yet in this respect he brings nothing to perfection here,—comes up to no fixed standard of perfect knowledge. The mind is but a tender shoot, when the winter of death invariably comes upon it. (Such species of plants always live and flourish again in the succeeding spring.) Even the comparatively learned and philosophical Newton, felt conscious of being such an infant in knowledge, that he considered himself as a little child picking up pebbles on the shore of the great ocean of philosophy.

Since, then, the human mind only enters at most upon the threshold, upon the *first rudiments* of that knowledge, for which it appears to be formed, and in which it tends to advance; since it never, in this world, but just tastes enough of knowledge and happiness to make it pant, and show forth its capacity, for more,—the dictates of reason are, that man is yet to live; that he is to resume his studies in another state of being, and progress in that knowledge, for which the constitution of his mind is so wonderfully adapted.

It is owing to this feature of the human mind of which I speak, that the nations of the earth in general, *even the* savage tribes of the wilderness, have cher-

ished expectations of another life. Without the light of revelation, they have formed various and some extravagant notions of that future state; but the wants and tendencies of the human mind have induced them to seek relief from present pains and troubles, in looking forward to another and a better life.

> "The soul, uneasy and confined from home,
> Rests and expatiates in a life to come.
> Lo, the poor Indian, whose untutored mind
> Sees God in clouds, or hears him in the wind;
> His soul proud science never taught to stray
> Far as the solar walk, or milky way;
> Yet simple nature to his hope has given,
> Behind the cloud-topt hills, an humbler heaven;
> Some safer world in depths of wood embraced,
> Some happier island in the watery waste;
> Where slaves once more their native land behold,
> No thieves torment, nor Christians thirst for gold."

That this reasonable hope of future existence will be answered, does not, even in the nature of things, appear either *impossible* or *improbable*. The doctrine of the resurrection is no more mysterious than many things with which we are acquainted. Indeed, there is no more mystery in it than there is in everything we see. Our own present existence, which we do not pretend to dispute, is as mysterious as the resurrection from the state of the dead.

II. But I will proceed to consider the nature, and the manner, of the transactions which the New Testament records as the basis of its claim of Messiahship for Jesus, and as the ground of Christian hope.

When we have come to indulge some trembling hope, through the reasonings of our own minds, it crowns our desire with a happy *assurance*, to find external evidence on which to rely. Especially on so

deeply interesting and vastly important a subject as the one before us, it would give us unspeakable happiness to receive tangible proof, to convert our travail of soul into the assurance of hope.

Now if the Lord would show us one raised from death to life, whom we know to have been dead, we should receive it as sufficient external evidence of this glorious doctrine. But would it be necessary that we should see such an instance ourselves? This would be to say that, in order to keep the doctrine established in the world, it is necessary that the Lord should continue raising men in every country, and in every neighborhood, and in every age, so that every individual should be witness of it. And this would be turning out of employment that *investigation* of evidence, which improves the mind, and by which it is well that we should come into the truth. We will not be so unreasonable as this. If we can find account of some one person, a person of notoriety, who has been dead, and raised again to life, as a sample of the human race; and if we can find this account as well authenticated as many histories which we have of past events,—we will be satisfied with it as a good proof of the doctrine of a future life.

Well, we have a book put into our hands, containing such an account,—and, I think, even *better* attested than any history which we have, relating events that transpired in ages past. I have the book now before me. It gives an account of one Jesus, called the Christ, sent from God on an important errand, on a divine commission. It is said that he is the Light of men, and came to be the Saviour of the world. He was so extraordinary a personage, and bent on so *gracious* an errand, that an angel from heaven came

and thus proclaimed his advent;—"Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." And a multitude of the heavenly host, in view of the result of his glorious mission, came down to the shepherds' plains, and raised their joyful song, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will towards men."

He went on, and proved that he was sent of God, and endowed with divine authority and power, by a long series of miracles. He made the blind to see, the lame to walk, the deaf to hear, the dumb to speak, and the dead to live. These things appear well attested and faithfully recorded, and the miracles were generally performed in such a manner, and under such circumstances, as not to admit of deception.

Let us take, for instance, the case of the man born blind, restored to sight. This was not done in an obscure corner, and a person reported to have been restored to sight, of whom no one knew whether he was ever blind or not. It was done at Jerusalem, and upon a person well known there. The neighbors, and they who had seen the man who was born blind, said, "Is not this he that sat and begged? Some said, This is he; others said, He is like him: but he said, I am he." Then they brought him to the Pharisees, who also asked him how he had received his sight. And he told them. But they hoped it might not be made to appear that he had ever been blind. So they called the parents of him that had received his sight, "And they asked them saying, Is this your son, who you say was born blind? How then doth he now see? His parents answered, We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but by what

means he now seeth, we know not: he is of age, ask him: he shall speak for himself."

"Then again they called the man that had been blind, and said, Give God the praise; we know that this man is a sinner. He answered and said, Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not; one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." But they were still in perplexity. "They asked him again, What did he unto thee? How opened he thine eyes?" With boldness and good sense he answered them, "I have told you already." And on his reasoning with them to show that so good a deed could not have come, as they insinuated, from a bad spirit, they reviled him and cast him out.

There is no need of multiplying cases to show that the miracles of Jesus were known among his enemies as well as among his friends. This was generally the case. His enemies did not *dispute* that he wrought these wonders. They admitted the fact. But they charged him with doing these works through the agency of an evil spirit. It was as unreasonable, however, as it was malicious, to ascribe all these good works to an evil agency.

Concerning the *character* of Christ, it is unimpeachable. His doctrine bears the evidence of its being from above; and his instructions are delivered with a majesty well becoming a divine Teacher. Everything we can see in all his life,—in his works, and in his doctrines,—appears totally opposite to what might be expected from an impostor, aiming at his own aggrandizement.

But the prejudices of the Jews against him are strong; at the spread of his doctrine they are much *alarmed;* and they resolve to get him out of the way.

—They seize him,—drag him before the magistrates, —where he is hastily and maliciously condemned. They send him up to a higher tribunal; Pilate, the judge, examines him, and is persuaded of his innocence. But he is intimidated by the magistrates, and delivers him up into their hands. They crucify and bury him;—seal the sepulchre, and set their own watch upon it. A short time after, and even before the very magistrates who condemned him, it is boldly published that Jesus, whom they had crucified, IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD!

Is there any evidence against this?—What say the strong guard, which were placed upon the sepulchre on purpose to prevent imposition? Do they come forward and show that the body of Jesus remained in the sepulchre beyond the time he had set for his rising? No. They make mention of the wonders which took place at the set time; and all Jerusalem knows that the body was then gone from the tomb: but the soldiers are hired to say, that Jesus' disciples stole away his body while they were asleep.

Let us examine this testimony, the only testimony which pretends to account for the absence of Jesus from the tomb, without admitting his resurrection. How did they know that the disciples carried away their Master's body? Answer: Because they were asleep when it was done. Such testimony is not admissible; for then they knew nothing, and of course, their witness is nothing.

But how incredible is it that the watch did all fall asleep. As we should naturally suppose, under such an excitement, every precaution was taken to prevent deception concerning Jesus' rising from the

dead; for they knew that he had said he should rise again on the third day.

Therefore, "the chief priest and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night, and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first."[a]—Under these circumstances, we cannot doubt that they placed upon the sepulchre such a guard, that, under the dreadful responsibility in which their laws placed such guards, there was no danger of their all at once falling asleep.

And, on the other hand, such an undertaking as that of stealing away the body of Jesus, and reporting that he had risen from the dead, could hardly have been thought of by the disciples, with all their timidity, and the views they had entertained.—*First*, as it respects their timidity. Not one of them had courage enough to stand by their Master when he was condemned to be put to death. Even Peter, who had been the most resolute, found his courage to fail. He thrice denied his Lord. How then would these poor cowardly fishermen have dared to risk themselves to get the body of Jesus away from a strong guard, in a time of such mad excitement? And *second*, as it respects the views they had entertained. They had been expecting that Jesus would build up a powerful kingdom in this world, and redeem Israel from the Roman yoke. Their thoughts did not rise above temporal things. "We trusted," said they, "that it had

[a] Matt. xxvii. 63, 64.

been he which should have redeemed Israel." Such being their views, we can find nothing to favor a suspicion, that the disciples would have wished to steal away his body, even if they could safely have done so. For if they believed that God would raise him from the dead, they would rather choose to leave him as he was, that the power of God might be displayed and evinced before their adversaries. And if they did not expect that he would rise again, all their hopes of his restoring Israel were at an end; for they could not expect to make his dead body king over Israel, if they had carried it away. Therefore, considering the views and expectations of the disciples of Jesus at that time, I can see no reason for the suspicion that they would have wished to steal away his body, if they had courage to undertake it.

No wonder that the Jews suspected them of such a design; for the progress of the cause of Christ, of the nature and design of which they were ignorant, had much alarmed them; and when persons are under a high excitement of fear, they will imagine a thousand dangers. Their suspicions doubtless were, that the disciples of Jesus might think to steal away his body, and report that he had risen from the dead:—and that then they would put forward the most artful and active of their number, to personify him, and draw away the people after him as the Messiah, the one who had been crucified and raised from the dead, until sufficient strength had been collected to seize on the reins of government. But such a plan, as it appears, the disciples never thought of. When they preached Jesus, that he had risen from the dead, they never presented any personage as a claimant of an earthly throne, nor did they seem to be pushing their

efforts at all for promotion and power in the world. They had then learned that their Master's kingdom is not of this world.

But it appears to have been so evident at that day that Christ was alive from the dead, that the Jews themselves had hardly boldness enough to dispute it. When Peter restored the lame man that sat at the gate of the temple, and the wondering multitude crowded around him, he addressed them on the subject of the resurrection of Christ, as a matter against which he feared no argument.—"Ye men of Israel, why marvel ye at this? Or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness, we had made this man to walk?—The God of your fathers hath glorified his *Son Jesus;* whom ye delivered up, and denied him in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let him go."[b] Though the priests and rulers were angry at such addresses, and were pricked at their hearts, yet they never encountered them with any formal argument.

When Paul was brought before the rulers on trial for his doctrine, he stood up with confidence, boldness, and simplicity, and declared his conversation which he had held with Jesus, who had been crucified, and raised again to life. "And the king," saith he, "knoweth these things, before whom I speak freely; for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him, for this thing was not done in a corner." And King Agrippa, by Paul's defence of his cause, was almost persuaded himself to be a Christian. What! Notwithstanding the preaching of the resurrection of Christ had raised so great an excitement, and enraged the people in that coun-

[b] Acts iii. 12, 13.

try to so great a degree, had they no regular testimony against it? No. Their principal argument was, to call the witnesses of Jesus Satan's children, disturbers of the peace, and turners of the world upside down.

But when the enemies of Christ had put him to death, and had him in their own hands, knowing that he had said that he should rise again on the third day, —and they had taken particular care, as we might suppose they would, to prevent any deception being practised by his disciples,—if he did *not* rise as he had foretold, when the third day had passed, they would have produced the body, and the whole matter would have been set at rest. All the officers and people who had been concerned in the crucifixion of Jesus, —all these at *least* would have run together, and made themselves certain of the fact, that Jesus was an *impostor*. They would have shown to the world that he had not risen as he said,—that they had his body in their own possession. Then, if any had afterwards come forward, and reported that Jesus rose from the dead on the third day, abundant and regular proof would have been brought against them, and their bold and arrogant imposture would have been put down forever. But as it is, this is so far from being the case, that when a witness of Jesus' resurrection is brought to trial on account of his doctrine, there is no evidence against him; and the king himself, who is on the side of the witness' enemies, and before whom he stands for judgment, openly declares to this minister of Jesus, that he is *almost persuaded to believe his testimony!*

Indeed, after examining, by the strictest rules of criticism, the testimony of Christ's resurrection, I am

unable to conceive how we could have been furnished with more satisfactory evidence. Even if all the *rulers and people of Israel* had espoused the doctrine of his resurrection, it would not have been so *evident* as it now is to us. For then, as there would have been no opposition to it, we should have had more room for suspicion that the whole affair was a mere fabrication, which the Jewish rulers had agreed to support from sinister motives.—But the opposition of the Jews, considering the circumstances noticed under which they opposed, the *kind* of opposition, and the kind of success which it met with, tends to confirm the testimony of the Christian witnesses.

III. But may it not be that this book, which bears such indubitable marks of truth, admitting it to have been written, and to record what was publicly and extensively preached, in the age to which it ascribes these events, *is itself the fabrication of a later age?* That there never was such a man as Jesus Christ, making the excitement in the world which is here represented; being crucified under the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea; and being preached soon after as risen from the dead? That there were not, shortly afterwards, churches formed in his name, at Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, &c., nor any such men as Paul, Peter, and others, visiting among such churches, and writing to them the letters which are herein contained?—May it not be that *this book* was wholly forged in some later age, and palmed upon the people as having been written in the age to which it assigns these events?

No. Such a supposition cannot be admitted for a moment. It does not bear sufficient marks of *probability*, or even *possibility*, to be adhered to by any

man of respectable discernment. Fix upon what time you will for the bringing forward of this forged book, say some time in the third century. This would be, of course, the origin of the sect who espouse the system it contains. I might rather say, it would be the origin of the system itself. Yet the book professes to have been written three centuries before; and it represents its cause and its converts as having been notorious, and extended throughout Judea, Jerusalem, Rome, Corinth, Galatia, Ephesus, Philippi, Colosse, Thessalonica, and other countries, in that long passed age,—three centuries before the sect was ever heard of, or ever started in the world! It is plain to be seen that the book must have destroyed itself the very day of its appearance.

I can find no more reason to doubt there having been such a man as Jesus Christ, and that all these things herein stated were said and written about him at the time they purport to have been, and by the persons to whom they are ascribed,—than I have for doubting that there was such an emperor as Tiberius, such a governor as Pilate, and such a king as Agrippa; or that the works ascribed to Josephus were written by the man whose name they bear.

That there was a person called Jesus Christ, the founder of the sect called Christians, who lived and was crucified at the time stated by the book before us, the New Testament,—and that shortly after, there were churches formed in his name, in Rome, and other places, where Paul and other apostles are herein represented as having visited, preached, and written, —these things, I say, are supported by the testimony of our enemies. I will instance a quotation from *Tacitus*, a celebrated Roman historian and pleader

under the reign of *Domitian* and *Nerva*, whose reigns were between fifty and sixty-five years after the death of Christ. He wrote the work to which I refer, however, five years after the death of Nerva, about *seventy* years from Christ's crucifixion. In giving an account of the setting of fire to Rome, by Nero, an event which took place about thirty years after the crucifixion, Tacitus writes thus:—"But neither these exertions, nor his largesses to the people, nor his offerings to the gods, did away the infamous imputation under which Nero lay, of having ordered the city to be set on fire. To put an end, therefore, to this report, he laid the guilt, and inflicted the most cruel punishment, upon a sect of people, who were held in abhorrence for their crimes, and called by the vulgar, *Christians*. The founder of that name was Christ, who suffered death in the reign of Tiberius, under his procurator Pontius Pilate. This pernicious superstition, thus checked for awhile, broke out again, and spread, not only over Judea, where the evil originated, but through Rome also, whither everything that is bad finds its way, and is practised." With what this writer says of the *character* of the Christian religion, we have no concern. It is not an hundredth part so strange that he was unacquainted with the excellency of the system, and called it a pernicious error, as it is that some learned professors of Christianity, in this day, should be almost totally ignorant of the doctrine we profess, except its name, and should call it a *pernicious heresy*. But this eminent heathen historian is good evidence, that the Christian doctrine, after the crucifixion of Christ, started anew and with vigor in Judea, (just as the New Testament writers represent,) and soon extended itself *even unto* Rome:—and that the author of this religion

was the crucified Jesus, who also suffered under Pontius Pilate.

Finally, of the genuineness of the writings which we have in the New Testament, there is more evidence than of that of any other work of as early date. This is as it should be. The abundance of evidence should always correspond with the importance of the subject. This is truly the fact in the case before us. The historical books of the New Testament, in particular, by which I mean the four Gospels, and the Acts, are quoted and referred to as authentic and genuine, by a connected chain of Christian writers and commentators, from some cotemporary with, or immediately succeeding the apostles, down to the present time. But I have not room here to make quotations from them. I will barely say, that from the *beginning* there were but *four Gospels* mentioned as being relied upon as indisputably genuine, and they are the four which are embraced in our Scriptures.

In short, we need no better evidence than we have, that the account which we have before us of the life, the doctrine, the death, and the resurrection of Christ, was written and made public in the same age and country to which these things are ascribed. And there is not to be found, against the resurrection of Christ, any better argument than the one before considered and found to be nothing,—that the disciples stole away the body while the guard were asleep.

But why should the Jews have been such determined enemies to Jesus? Or why should they have persisted in declaring him an impostor? They did not, as we have seen, deny the reality of the *works* which the Gospels ascribe to him; but they charged his wonderful powers upon a confederacy with evil

demons. Even Celsus, in his work against Christianity, written in the 2d century, admitted the miracles of Jesus, but, like his brethren of the Saviour's time, ascribed them to demoniacal agency. But why did they charge him with imposture? His life, sufferings and death, so exactly answered to the description which their prophets had given of the expected Messiah, that, in reading the prophets, we should think, if we did not know to the contrary, that we were reading a narrative of Jesus written by a personal acquaintance. And they have indicated the time, too, with such precision, that the Jews generally were looking for his advent as near. These prophetic books are held sacred by the Jews. Our enemies have been our *librarians*, keeping for us the Scriptures, which point out the character, and the time of our Saviour.

And he came at the time their prophets had foretold. But because they knew him not, neither the voice of their prophets, which were read every Sabbath day amongst them, they fulfilled them in condemning him. Though he came in the character which the prophets had described, yet it was not as their national pride and worldly ambition had pictured to themselves. But he disdained to play the impostor that he might gain their favor. He steadily pursued his heavenly Father's will. Through trials and persecutions, he labored in the cause of love and good will to men. He died on the cross, and was laid in the tomb. "*But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.*"

Since, then, God has kindly given us so good external evidence of that doctrine, which is so reasonable, and for which we have such real need, such constitutional *want*, we will gladly receive it for the satisfaction of

our souls. Since Christ, the FIRST FRUITS, has come in, we will steadfastly look for the coming of the HARVEST. "Though now we see him not, in him believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls."

# CHAPTER XII.

## THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD.

"For as in Adam all die; even so in Christ shall all be made alive." 1 Cor. xv. 22.

In the preceding chapter, we examined some of the evidence touching the truth of the Gospel history. On the main facts recorded by this history, comprised in the writings of the New Testament, we ground, as Christians, our system of religious faith. In the said examination we did not take an extensive range of argument, for so we might have filled, with that single subject, an expensive volume. We restricted this department of our labor to a few of the most direct, comprehensive and conclusive arguments, available to the simplest and most illiterate reader.

Among the important facts established by the record, are those of the crucifixion of Jesus, and his resurrection from the state of death as the first-fruits of them that slept. Receiving Christ, then, in this relation to mankind, as alive from the dead, our own resurrection to a future life is a consequent truth. So does the apostle argue, in that portion of his writings from which I have taken my *key-text* and *motto*, at the head of this chapter. Having certified the fact of the resurrection of Christ, he proceeds to argue the resurrection of all men in him.

It appears, from the manner of his discourse in the commencement of the chapter, that there were some in Corinth who admitted the Messiahship and resurrection of Christ, and yet denied the doctrine of the gen-

eral resurrection. "For I delivered into you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once; of whom the greater part remain unto this present, but some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James, then of the apostles. And last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time. Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: and if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God; because we have testified of God that he raised up Christ, whom he raised not up, if so be that the dead rise not."

The apostle further shows them that they were, upon the whole, *losers* by professing the Christian name, if they were looking for nothing through Christ but temporal things. For the most valuable doctrine of the gospel of Christ, is that of a glorious immortality beyond the tomb. This answered to their wants, supported them under trials, gave them joy in afflictions, and a heaven on earth.

While their spirits were cheered and animated by this blessed hope, and their hearts were warmed by the love of Christ, they could faithfully labor to disseminate this gospel, and bless mankind;—and whatever were the persecutions, or external hardships they met with, they were yet the most happy of all men on earth. Their lively and exalted hope of immor-

tality, was worth more than all temporal goods, or worldly ease.

But if they hoped in Christ for nothing but temporal things, then their hope was worth no more than that of their unbelieving enemies. In that case, by openly professing the name of Christ, they subjected themselves to those additional troubles and persecutions, without the advantage of that infinitely valuable hope of immortality, to more than counterbalance them.

"But now *is* Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

It is the grand object of our present inquiries, to obtain a correct understanding of the Scriptural doctrine of the resurrection. We must understand what the doctrine of the resurrection is, before we can know whether to rejoice, or to mourn, in contemplation of it. Paul does not, while dwelling on this subject, call upon the people to choose whether they will have endless happiness or endless misery, in the future state; but he urges the doctrine of the resurrection, in opposition to the doctrine of *no future existence—of perishing like the brutes.* And to know whether to rejoice or to mourn on account of his doctrine, I must know whether that resurrection state which Christ has brought to light, is better or worse than no existence at all.

I shall perhaps look with the more care and diligence into this subject, on account of the views which many of the learned and pious of my elder Christian brethren have entertained upon it. The views which *they have* held on man's immortal state, would render

the doctrine of the resurrection far more gloomy to me than that to which the apostle was engaged in opposing it. Yes, even if I expected to share with the most favored class, I should never think on the subject of the resurrection, but with insupportable pain and anguish of heart. My horrors would be as great, at least, as those expressed by Young, when he thus approaches the subject of his doctrine on the future state:—

"Horrors beneath, darkness on darkness, hell
Of hell, where torments behind torments dwell;
A furnace formidable, deep and wide,
O'er-boiling with a mad sulphureous tide,
Expands its jaws, most dreadful to survey,
And roars outrageous for the destined prey.
* * * * *
"I faint, my tardy blood forgets to flow,
My soul recoils at the stupendous woe;
That woe, those pangs, which from the guilty breast,
In these, or words like these, shall be expressed:—
Who burst the barriers of my peaceful grave?
Ah! cruel death, that would no longer save,
But grudged me e'en that narrow dark abode,
And cast me out into the wrath of God;
Where shrieks the roaring flame, the rattling chain
And all the dreadful eloquence of pain,
Our only song; black fire's malignant light
The sole refreshment of the blasted sight."

Such are the vivid colors, lurid with madness and horror, in which learned divines have portrayed the condition into which, they say, the resurrection shall introduce countless millions of our race. If I can be made to believe it, I will go sorrowing all my days. I make no appeal to the selfish principle here,—no allusion to the class into which I or you may fall. I speak as a member of the great intelligent family, to

whom existence is a thankless gift, unless it is on the whole a blessing, and around the whole circle of whom should flow the spirit of the royal law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Who, in the exercise of this Christian spirit, even forgetting himself as to his own allotment, would not regard as a calamity, a source of regret rather than of hope, the resurrection, as a whole, of the human family, in the light of those human doctrines?

Now the true Christian "faith is the substance of things *hoped for*;"[a] and by its influence upon the mind it produces "joy unspeakable and full of glory."[b] Suppose there is a family who are living in the enjoyment of kind affection, and of a common share of earthly good. But they have no hope of a life to come; and when they think of death, as certain soon to sever those ties of love, and quench those intelligent spirits, forever—it fills their minds with darksome gloom. A member of the loving group is sick unto death, and they are all sitting in melancholy mood, pondering upon their hopeless separation. A messenger enters their silent mansion, and professes to come with authority to assure them of another, and an endless life. They all start up from their seats with joyful surprise, and the very dying child rises up in his bed, to hear the full statement of the messenger. He proceeds to say, that they shall all be raised up from the sleep of death, into a life that shall never end;—that one half of their number shall be placed upon seats of bliss,—and the other half plunged into a sea of liquid fire, looking up with a countenance distorted with agony, crying for the Power that made them, to strike them out of

[a] Heb. xi. 1. [b] 1 Peter i. 8, 9.

being, and their cries answered with scalding volleys of increasing vengeance—forever! Who could picture the sad disappointment of the listening family? Who could describe the *more* killing anguish, and the *multiplied* sorrows, of such as should believe the message? Their turning to this description of a future life, for relief from the gloomy thoughts of eternal sleep, is "as if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and laid his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him."[c] They would delight to go back, like the subjects of Jupiter in the fable, to their respective former allotments.

I do not speak this, under an impression that our choice about these things can alter the purpose of God. I rejoice that it cannot;—for I verily believe that the purpose of God is such, that, when rightly understood, every reasonable being must supremely prefer and admire it. But I have made these reflections to induce you to a very strict and prayerful inquiry, whether the life and immortality which Jesus brought to light through his gospel, in a view of which saints of old, and angels in heaven rejoiced, *is such*, that a benevolent heart must prefer to it, even as a whole, the darkness of eternal non-existence for the race.

Upon this grand subject of inquiry, involving the value of the resurrection to man, we are now prepared to advance. And in pursuit of our object, we will methodically consider the *key-text* we have chosen; and, in connection with it, we will avail ourselves of the light of the context, and of the general Scripture teachings on the subject.

[c] Amos v. 9.

1st. "As in Adam all die." Let it be here observed, that the apostle does not say, "As in Adam all *died*," six thousand years ago;—alluding, as some have understood it, to the total fall and corruption of human nature in the first transgression. But, "As in Adam all *die*." He speaks in the present tense, implying a sense in which all are *now* in Adam. Is there any sense in which mankind are, universally, in Adam? We are in Adam by an inheritance of the Adamic or earthy nature. We are in the image of the earthy man. The apostle so explains it afterwards in the same chapter. "The first man is of the earth earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

In this earthy man, or in the image of the earthy, as exhibited in the first Adam, "all die." We are all partakers of mortality and death." "All flesh is grass, and the glory of man is as the flower of grass." "Man cometh forth as a flower, and is cut down,—he dieth, and wasteth away."

2d. "Even so in Christ shall all be made alive." When you carefully consider here the apostle's *antithesis*, his putting our participation of life in Christ. over against our participation of mortality and death in Adam, the sentiment clearly expressed is this,—that we shall then be in Christ "even so," or in the same sense in which we are now in Adam; that we shall inherit his state and nature;—that Christ will be as properly the "Head of every man" in the *resurrection* state, as Adam is reckoned to be in this;

—that we shall not only be immortal like him, but possessed of the same moral nature, governed by the same moral principles.

But Paul does not leave us to gather this important sentiment alone from an observation of his *antithesis*, in the text. Though it is clearly involved in this, to one who duly considers it,—yet he proceeds directly and distinctly to declare this essential fact in the character of the immortal state. This explanation follows the text:—"But every man in his own order: Christ the First-fruits; afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy shall be destroyed, death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith, All things are put under him, it is manifest that he is excepted who did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject to him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."

From this we learn, *first*, that at the resurrection, men will not only be immortal, but also subject to Christ;—that then will take place the *ultimatum* of the gospel plan; and Christ, having accomplished his work, and subjected all to his blessed reign, will deliver up the kingdom to God the Father. And, *second*, that the all things which are to be subjected to Christ, comprehend all beings excepting God, who put all things under him. And also, *third*, that the sense in which all are to be subject unto Christ, is

the same as that in which *he* will be subject to God the Father; consisting in a willing and reverential submission, and a oneness of mind and character. For when Paul speaks of the subjection of Christ to the Father, in connection with the subjection of all things to Christ, he must have expressed a common meaning by the word *subjection*, or else there is no harmony in the sentence. This blessed sense in which the human family is to be subjected to Christ, had been clearly expressed in the same epistle, in the 11th chapter. "But I would have you to know that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the Head of Christ is God."

After having thus connected with the resurrection this important subjection to Christ, this oneness of mind with him,—and then considered some foolish questions of his opposers relating to the bodies with which the dead should be raised, the apostle resumes again his discourse on the character of the immortal state. "One star differeth from another star in glory. So also is the resurrection of the dead."—That is, as God has made many different kinds of bodies, and has made some stars to differ from other stars in glory, so also will he make us in the resurrection state to be different from what we are in the present. "So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man, Adam, was made a living *soul;* the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.

Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterwards that which is spiritual."—Here follow the three verses which were quoted to the subject of dying in Adam. They are further explanatory of the text, showing the sense in which we *are* in Adam, and in which we shall be in Christ. "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy; and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

Further he says, "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." This saying Paul quoted from the prophet Isaiah:—"He will swallow up death in victory, and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces."[d] Hence it appears that the immortal state is free from all cause of pain and sorrow, so that when death is swallowed up in victory, *tears* will be wiped away from off all faces. The whole resurrection is like the First-fruits. "Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the *First-fruits* of them that slept." And the same writer lays it down as a theological axiom, "If the first-fruits be holy, the lump is also holy."

The same is the doctrine which *Jesus* taught, with great plainness, concerning the resurrection state. In

[d] Isa. xxv. 8.

controversy with the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, Jesus said, (Matt. xxii. 29, 30,) "Ye do greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." Here the whole subject of the resurrection is before them;—the question is, whether the human species are to live again after death. The Sadducees say, no. And they now bring a case of a woman who had seven husbands, in order to present some difficulty in the way of the regulation of society in the future state. They do not appear to conceive any question, but that, according to Jesus' doctrine of the resurrection, the woman, and the seven men who had been her husbands, would all live again, and all in the *same world*, as much as they did on earth.

And Jesus, in his answer, did not undertake to describe how that probably a part of the persons they spoke of would be howling in infinite torments, and the others rejoicing over them;—nor did he undertake to frighten them into a *profession* of the doctrine of the resurrection, by telling them that they would find it true when it would be too late for them to be benefited by it. No:—He answers with a dignity well becoming a divine teacher: "Ye do greatly err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels of God in heaven." And then, in support of the doctrine of the resurrection, he refers them to their own Scriptures, where God spoke of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, long after their death, in such a manner as recognized them still in existence, or destined yet to live. Here the fact is distinctly stated, that the resurrection state is, without

any limitation or reserve, as the state of the angels of God in heaven.

Jesus is represented as declaring this sentiment with equal plainness, in Luke xx. 35, 36:—"But they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry, nor are given in marriage: neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

Jesus leaves no room for the notion that there will be an immortal state, in which men will continue in sin and shame, the characteristic children of the wicked one. "They," without distinction, "*they* which shall be accounted worthy to obtain the resurrection from the dead, shall be equal unto the angels; and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection."

Hence it is certain, that if there are any who will not become sharers of a glorious and happy immortality, being children of God,—they will never be raised at all into an immortal state. For the gospel reveals no other. There is a sect of Christians, sometimes called *annihilationists*, who believe there are some such,—some who will never be raised again from the dead. And they have used the Scripture last quoted as favoring their views. They have laid particular emphasis on the word, *worthy*. "They which shall be accounted *worthy* to obtain the resurrection from the dead." This they have considered to apply exclusively to a particular class, whose virtues entitle them to an immortal state of being, as a just reward.

But an attention to the general doctrine of the gospel, and a due consideration of the several records

made of this same discourse of our Lord to the Sadducees, will expose the incorrectness of this opinion. Though this doctrine is not a millionth part so appalling as that popular doctrine which we quoted from Young, yet its glory is not worthy to be compared with that of the gospel. Jesus Christ and his apostles urge the doctrine of suitable rewards and punishments, pending the conduct of men; but they never give out the idea, that a future immortal state of existence is either to be bought or sold by the doings of men in time. If such had been the sentiment which Jesus expressed to the Sadducees; if the word *worthy* was applied to the moral desert of men, as procuring for themselves a resurrection state,—then this would certainly have been the most important word in the whole conversation. It would have contained a point in the doctrine of the resurrection, which every faithful witness would have kept *foremost*, whenever he spoke or wrote on the subject.

But of the three Evangelists who have recorded this discourse of Jesus, two have not used the word *worthy* at all. Matthew writes, "*For in the resurrection*—they are as the angels of God in heaven." And Mark, (xii. 25,) "For when they shall rise from the dead,—they are as the angels which are in heaven." Now, although there are frequently some verbal differences in the records which the several Evangelists have made of the same discourses of Christ, yet they are all particular to give every important idea; they omit no distinguishing point of doctrine, which any discourse they record was meant to enforce. This consideration, together with the general sentiment of the Scriptures, obliges us to conclude that the word *worthy*, which Luke alone has used in this case, (and he is the

Evangelist who did not personally hear the words of Jesus,) was not intended to apply to the moral desert of human conduct, but to the worth or value which God sets upon his creatures, according to the scale of being in which he has placed them. The same idea is expressed by the word *value*, in Matt. x. 31; "Ye are of more value than many sparrows;"—and also the word *better*, in Matt. vi. 26; "Behold the fowls of the air! are ye not much better than they?" Moral desert could not have been meant by the words *value* and *better*, because in this respect there is no comparison between man and the fowls and sparrows. The reference was to God's estimate of them as his intelligent children. So of the word worthy in the case before us. In this view, the three Evangelists represent Christ as speaking the same sentiment, viz., that they on whom God sets such value as that he designs to give them a resurrection from the dead, shall be as the angels in heaven, and characteristic children of God. And who are they? Answer: The human species. "For as in Adam all die; even so in Christ shall all be made alive." "There shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust."*

In the latter passage, while we have an answer to the question, "who shall share in the resurrection?" and an answer, too, which precludes all cavil as to its speaking of the whole race, or a particular class of men, we have also a clear indication of the character of that state. The resurrection of mankind, even of the unjust, was to the apostle an object of *hope*. This he could not have said if he had believed the unjust would be raised up, and held up in being forever, for the sake of an endless existence of suffering. If Paul

* Acts xxiv. 15.

had believed this, he would have said of it as he said of the foreseen *temporal* sufferings of the Jews, that the contemplation occasioned "great heaviness and sorrow." But *hope* involves expectation and *desire;* and to charge the benevolent soul of the apostle with *desiring* an existence of infinite evil to a portion of his fellow-creatures, would be an outrage of common decency. No; the inspired ministers of Jesus viewed the universal resurrection of the dead, as altogether a subject of thanksgiving and praise, of consolation and *hope.* And there is no testimony of the Scriptures, which evidently relates to the literal resurrection, which contradicts this sentiment of hope, or casts a shade upon it. The gift of immortal life to man is not according to the *purpose* of God alone, but it is according to the purpose and *grace* of God, which are brought to light through the gospel.[r]

### *Resurrection to Condemnation.*

There are a few passages in the sacred Volume, which have been thought by some to teach a different doctrine; and these we will examine at the present stage of our progress. The most important text of the class referred to, is that in John v. 28, 29: "*Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.*"

These words were pronounced by our Lord before the unbelieving Jews, when they had been seeking to kill him because he healed an impotent man on the

[r] 2 Tim. i. 9, 10.

Sabbath day, and also called God his Father, making himself, as they construed it, equal with God. Much reliance has been placed on this text, by some, for support to the sentiment of endless guilt and condemnation. They have supposed it to be a declaration of the literal resurrection of all men from the state of the dead, into a final, fixed, and eternal state;—a state of unalterable happiness to some, and of unalterable misery to others, according to their works on earth.

If this be the sense of the text before us, we wish to know it. No person in his right mind can wish to be deceived, or to misunderstand the word of God. Truth will stand. And so far as we deceive ourselves, if it be by any abuse of the opportunities we have for correct information, we must suffer a just punishment for our iniquity. Every sober man's inquiry is, What is truth? When he reads and considers any portion of the Scriptures, his fervent desire is, to know what the inspired writer or speaker meant. He is equally cautious against taking *from*, and adding *to*, the word, in any case. For one of these practices as well as the other, is treating with disrespect that wisest and best of Beings, by whose inspiration the Holy Scriptures came. It is, in effect, to say, that *He* is not so capable as *we*, to plan a system of religion to be revealed to mankind. Under a solemn sense of our own littleness, and of the unerring wisdom of Him, who delivered the words above quoted, let us proceed with impartial candor, and prayerful earnestness, to seek the true meaning of his speech.

It is my usual custom, when inquiring into the meaning of an important text upon which many learned and pious of my elder Christian brethren have given an opinion, in respect to them, and in dislike to all

needless innovation, to examine their opinions first, and viewing them by the light of Scripture, to follow them so far as they have followed the Divine testimony. This course I will pursue in the present case.

1. I have already mentioned the popular opinion, that the text relates to the introduction of all men into a final and unalterable state. But here we deem it a solemn duty to inquire, what is the Scriptural authority for such an opinion? There is certainly nothing in the text, nor in the context, which authorizes the opinion that Jesus here spoke of all men being introduced into an unalterable state. The declaration is simply this: "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." Nothing is here said about their condition becoming unchangeable. Where then shall we find support for this opinion? Do *the Scriptures in general,* when speaking on the state and kingdom which God will fix and make unalterable, afford us any good reason for understanding the text in the sense which is now in question? Very far from it. Jesus here speaks of some men coming forth into a state of condemnation. Now is it the sentiment of Scripture in general, that a state of sin and condemnation is ever to be established of God, as a final, fixed, and unalterable state? Every person who is conversant with the Scriptures knows better. To what part of the Bible will you direct me, that I may find the word of Jehovah pledged, for his building up, immortalizing, and unchangeably fixing the reign of darkness and condemnation? You will not undertake to show *me* a text which speaks so strange a sentiment. The

word of God engages for the support of the opposite cause, that of holiness and peace; and for the *putting down* of the reign of evil. In execution of his word, he has commissioned and ordained his Son, and given him all power in heaven and in earth, to destroy sin, and subdue all things to himself—to his own holy reign. This has been abundantly exemplified in preceding parts of this volume.

Now, since it is an undeniable truth, that with the annihilation of sin, and the subjection and reconciliation of all men to God, guilt and condemnation will cease, it follows of course that God, whose revealed purpose is that sin shall be destroyed, and all men reconciled to him, does not design to establish a state of guilt and condemnation as a final and unalterable state. For surely he has not two purposes directly opposite to each other. He has not purposed to make eternal like his own existence, that which he has purposed to destroy.

Forasmuch then as our text does not suggest that the state of condemnation into which it says that some "shall come forth," is their final and unalterable state; and the word of inspiration elsewhere recorded forbids the supposition that a state of guilt and condemnation ever will be unchangeably fixed,—we cannot adopt the common opinion on this Scripture. Even admitting that Christ here spoke of *the literal resurrection with immortal bodies*, we cannot admit that he spoke of the introduction of all into an unalterable state of *mind*. For if when all are raised with immortal bodies, some are in a state of guilt and condemnation of mind, in opposition to Christ,—though their bodies may not be changed, there must be yet a change of mind. For Christ must reign, and will not deliver up

his kingdom to God the Father, until he has subdued and reconciled all to himself. So long, therefore, as a single mind remains in opposition to Christ, his whole work is not done, and there must of course be yet some further change.

Having ascertained that Christ in the words before us, whether he spoke of the literal resurrection or not, did not teach the introduction of all men into their final and unalterable condition of *mind*, we are now led to question whether he did speak with reference to the *literal resurrection*.

What is the evidence, we inquire, that Jesus here spoke of the literal resurrection? Do you rely on the particular language which he used? On the phrase, "All that are in the graves—shall come forth?" It does not follow from this that the literal resurrection was meant; for such language is sometimes used in the Scriptures in a figurative sense. Indeed, most words and phrases which literally express any state, or condition, or local situation of man, or apply to natural objects in the earth, are also used in a figurative sense, with application to various subjects.

The *mountain* is used for *exaltation* and *stability*; as in Isa. ii. 2: "The *mountain* of the Lord's house shall be established in the tops of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it." Here the true religion of heaven is called a *mountain*, to signify its exalted character, and permanent establishment. The *rock* is likewise employed as an emblem, to represent *permanency* and *perfection*; as in Deut. xxxii. 4: "He is a *Rock*, his work is perfect." And as the perfection of God and the permanency of his word are represented by the *rock*, they who trust in him and walk in the light of his counte-

nance, are said to stand upon a rock;—while the opposite unsettled state of unbelief and sin, is figuratively represented by the *horrible pit* and *miry clay*; as in Ps. xl. 20: "He hath brought me up also out of the horrible pit, and of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." The *prison-house* is likewise used as an emblem in the sacred Scriptures, to signify the dark and enslaved state of mind from which Christ would redeem sinners. See Isa. xlii. 6, 7: "I will give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." The terms *sleep*, and *death*, are figuratively used to express a carnal and stupid state of mind. And coming out of this stupid state is called *awaking*, and *arising* from the dead;—as in Paul to the Ephesians: "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light."

The term *grave* is also used as an emblem, to denote a very low, degraded and oppressed condition. And the redemption of persons from this low state of trouble, is called their being *brought up out of their graves*. See Ezek. xxxvii. 11, 12, 13: "Then he said unto me, Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel: behold, they say, Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost: we are cut off for our parts. Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel. And ye shall know that I am the Lord, when I have opened your graves, and brought you up out of your graves,—and shall place you in your own land." Here the redemption of the Jews

from their seventy years' Babylonish captivity, was signified to them by the promise of God, that he would cause them to come up out of their graves, to inherit the land of Israel.

And now I inquire, what reason have you to offer why we should not understand that this *coming forth from the graves*, under consideration, is likewise a figurative expression of some change of condition with persons living on the earth. The Greek word rendered *graves* in this case is the same, or a derivative from the same, that the LXX. use for *graves* in the 12th verse of the passage just cited from Ezekiel. It is not *hades*, the state of death, from which the Scriptures represent that the literal resurrection brings mankind; but it is *mnemeia*, the *tombs*, *graves*, or *sepulchres*. Therefore, if we apply the text to the literal resurrection, we shall make it a very *partial* resurrection, the resurrection only of such as have been regularly *buried*. But thousands have lived and died, who were never interred in *mnemeia* or *graves*. The bodies of the antediluvians mouldered to dust upon the surface of the ground. The bodies of the Sodomites were burnt to ashes, and their ashes probably scattered to the four winds of heaven. The same has been the fate of multitudes of others, both of the wicked and the just. And the carcases of thousands of Jews, who perished in the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans, were food to the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air.

But though there have been so many thousands of the human species who were never interred in sepulchres or graves, yet they all went to *hades*, the state of death. Jacob said of his son Joseph, "I will go down into *hades* to my son mourning."[s] He did not

[s] Gen. xxxvii. 35.

mean by hades any single grave or tomb, for he did not suppose that Joseph was entombed. He believed that Joseph was eaten up by an evil beast. But it was into the unseen state of death that Jacob expected to go, to be like his beloved son. *Hades* is used to express this state, and it is from this state that the resurrection is represented as raising mankind. The Scripture doctrine of the resurrection has nothing to do with the *dust* which is deposited in *mnemeia*, the *tombs;* it relates to the raising of the *intellectual man* from *hades*, the state of death.[h] He who is the resurrection and the life proclaims his purpose, saying, "O death, I will be thy plagues! O hades, I will be thy destruction!"[i] And when the resurrection of all men is completed, then the triumphant exclamation will be raised, "O death, where is thy sting? O hades, (state of death,) where is thy victory?"[j] The

[h] When that spiritual part of man, which, being organized with the grosser earthy matter, constitutes him a living, rational, and moral being, goes out at death into a disorganized state, that disorganized state is what is expressed by the term *hades*, state of death. It is the state in which Solomon says, (Eccl. ix. 10,) "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom." But when this same spirit, be it sooner or later, is, by the omnific power of God, regenerated in organized bodies of the refined and heavenly substance, preserving its identity and resuming its consciousness, this becomes a perfect resurrection from *hades;*—and this second organized man is not of the dust of the ground—is not of the earth, earthy; but is of the heavenly substance, or heavenly nature. As we have seen, "The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly." (1 Cor. xv. 47, 49.) "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven;—that mortality might be swallowed up of life." (2 Cor. v. 1, 4.) Then will this mortal put on immortality; that is, we, as rational beings, who here exist in mortal constitutions, shall then exist in constitutions immortal and heavenly.

[i] Hos. xiii. 14. [j] 1 Cor. xv. 55.

circumstance, therefore, that the text speaks of a coming forth from *mnemeia*, the *tombs*, into which there are thousands of the dead who have never entered, and with which the literal resurrection has no concern,—this circumstance, I say, argues strongly in favor of this Scripture's being taken, like the coming up out of *mnemeia*, the tombs or graves, in Ezekiel, as a figurative expression of some event on the earth.

Where, then, is the argument for applying this Scripture to the subject of the literal resurrection? Will you refer me to the context? Will you say that *the context* shows that Jesus was speaking on the subject of the literal resurrection? I answer, the *context*, so far from showing that Christ spoke in the text of the literal resurrection, *favors*, and perhaps I may say, *authorizes* the conclusion, that the text was intended to be taken in a figurative sense. Begin at the 24th verse: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth my words, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation: but is passed from death unto life." Here is a passing from death unto life spoken of, which all will allow to be *figurative;* meaning the passing out of unbelief and its concomitant evils, signified by the term, *death*, into faith in Christ and its connected blessings, expressed by the term, *life.*

Jesus proceeds, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live." Christ in this verse repeats the sentiment expressed in the preceding, but with this addition. While in the preceding verse he simply stated that whosoever receiveth his word hath passed from death unto life, in *this* he emphatically declares and engages

his own agency in causing the dead to hear and receive his voice, and to pass from death unto life: saying, "The hour is coming and now is, when the dead *shall* hear the voice of the Son of God," &c. To show the fulfilment of this, St. Paul, a considerable time afterwards, said to a numerous circle of brethren, "You hath he *quickened*, who were *dead* in trespasses and sins."

Now, considering that Jesus spoke the words of this text while he was thus engaged in discoursing on a figurative resurrection, and that he did not intimate that he changed his subject from a *figurative* to the *literal* resurrection, we have no reason to believe that any such change of subject was made. Even should we say nothing of other reasons against taking this text in a literal sense, the connection in which it is found rather requires us to consider it figurative.

But I have another, and a very important circumstance to present, which bears with great weight against the common opinion on this Scripture. The circumstance is this. Wherever the literal resurrection is evidently spoken of, it is represented as introducing mankind into a state free from all sin, and guilt, and shame, even as the angels of God that are in heaven. The proofs of this fact have been, thus far, the main business of this chapter.

From the foregoing considerations it appears abundantly evident, that this text, which speaks of some coming forth "to the resurrection of condemnation," is not on the subject of the literal resurrection. And since the *language* of the text will admit of being construed as *figurative*, and the *context* requires such a construction, and *the testimony of Scripture in general*

forbids any other,—we can, with full satisfaction, dismiss the common opinion concerning it; and proceed—

2d. To inquire for the true meaning of this Scripture.

Jesus had just said that they who received his word had passed from death unto life; and that the hour was coming and then was, when the dead should hear his voice and live. "For," said he, "as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself. And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man."

"Marvel not at this." Marvel not at what? Marvel not at what I have said concerning the efficacy of my word to affect the state and condition of those who receive it, and of my authority to execute judgment; "for the hour is coming in which" you shall witness my "authority to execute judgment," and see a more extensive display of Divine power; when not only those who *receive* my word shall realize the sway of my authority, but even those who continue to be my *enemies* and *persecutors* shall feel the effect of the judgment which God hath given me to execute. "All that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth." That is, all who may be in situations resembling in some respects the dead in the tombs, shall be aroused by the judgments which I shall execute. "They that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." That is, they that have done well shall come into a confirmed and more full enjoyment of life and happiness; and they that have continued in unbelief and evil doing, shall be

aroused to their full measure of guilt and condemnation.

Now of what display of his authority to execute judgment, then coming, is it most likely that Jesus spoke? The judgment on which the other three Evangelists have, by their records, represented Christ as speaking more frequently and emphatically than on any other particular judgment, is that which was to inflict the dreadful punishment upon the disobedient Jews, of which Moses and the prophets had long forewarned them. And since Christ, according to the other three Evangelists, spoke so frequently and so emphatically upon this judgment, representing it to be the most terrible that ever was or ever *shall be*, it would have been strange if John had passed this subject entirely unnoticed, and never once introduced it in all his narrative. But there is no discourse of Christ which John has recorded, that more evidently refers to this judgment than the text before us. It speaks of a wonderful display of the power and authority of Christ to execute judgment, and a striking distinction between those that do good and those that do evil. And the discourses of Christ recorded by the other Evangelists, on the judgment which was then coming upon the Jews in that generation, call it emphatically, *The revelation of the Son of man in power and great glory*;[k] and speak of the same distinction of character; of the awarding of life and favor to faithful disciples, and shame and distress to the wicked and disobedient. And you will further bear in mind, that Jesus addressed these words to that same people whom the judgment then coming in that generation

[k] See Matt. xvi. 27, 28; xxiv. 30; xxv. 31. Mark xiii. 26. Luke xxi. 22, 27.

was to arouse to the suffering of shame and condemnation. And he addressed them on the same occasion on which the other Evangelists represent him as speaking to them most pointedly concerning that judgment; viz., the occasion of their determined opposition to his wholesome instructions, and seeking to put him to death. And this is not all which we have to offer, for applying this Scripture to the judgment which was then at hand. The form of the verb used here to express the coming of this event, denotes that it was *approaching*,—that it was, as it were, *on its way*. "*The hour is coming*." Our Lord was in this place discoursing on what *then was*, and what was *then approaching*, or *next in order*. The same phrase occurs in the 25th verse. "The hour *is coming*, and *now is*, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God." This work of quickening them who were dead in sin, which was *yet coming*, had also begun to be.

The phrase *erchetai hora*, which in this text is rendered *the hour is coming*, occurs in six other instances in John's gospel, in all of which it applies to events which were then near approaching. (See chap. iv. verses 21 and 23; and chap. xvi. verses 2d, 4th, 25th, and 32d.) These passages relate to the more perfect establishment of spiritual gospel worship, the persecutions to be endured by the Christian disciples, their dispersion at the time of his crucifixion, and his afterwards showing them more plainly of the gracious counsels of God. These were all *approaching* events, and accordingly Jesus said of them, as of the event spoken of in the text, *erchetai hora*, the hour *is coming*. Thus in every other case where John's gospel has the phrase which in this place is rendered,

*the hour is coming*, it is used in reference to an event which is *approaching*. And the Scriptures generally, perhaps I may say invariably, when they say of anything that it *is coming*, or it *cometh*, mean that it *approacheth*, or that it is next in order of time to something else spoken of. Therefore the circumstance, that of the time of the judgment which is the subject of the text, it was said, the hour *is coming*, corroborates the view which is so evident from other considerations, that it was the *then approaching* judgment of that generation.

In confirmation of the opinion that the text applies to the judgment which was to come in that generation, an opinion which we have drawn from a consideration of the occasion on which it was spoken, and a comparison of this with discourses of Christ recorded by other Evangelists, and from the fact that of the time of its fulfilment it was said to be then "*coming*," I I will refer you to a parallel passage in the 12th of Daniel. "And at that time shall Michael stand up, the great Prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time; and at that time thy people shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." This Scripture, learned divines of all denominations have considered, and that with the greatest propriety, to be parallel with that in John. *The awakening from the dust of the earth, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt*, in Daniel; and *the coming forth from the graves; they that have* done good unto the

*resurrection of life*, &c., in John,—are evidently spoken of as the same event. And since Jesus so clearly informs us in what event this prophecy of Daniel was to have its fulfilment, *this*, parallel with the record of John, explains that.

Jesus, in discoursing to his disciples on the destruction of Jerusalem and events connected therewith, referred to this very chapter in Daniel, saying, "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet,—then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains;—for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." Here Jesus speaks of the same time of trouble of which Daniel spoke; and he then fixes the time to that generation.

In the generation in which Christ was on earth, therefore, was that fulfilled which Daniel spoke; "And there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time. And many that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt." And I cannot see the least shadow of a reason to doubt that Jesus in the text spoke of the same event. We should very naturally have supposed, that when Jesus was addressing the people to whom the prophets spoke, and on a particular judgment which they had predicted, he would sometimes use the language which they had used on the same subject.

It is plain that events did take place in the time of that judgment, which, considering the ancient mode of speaking and writing, justified the strong language *of the text*, as spoken with reference to it. When

Jesus was here, he used to address the Jews as the most wicked people then on earth. Yet he found them hiding under false pretensions of piety; and calculating to escape the Divine threatenings, to which their works so clearly proved them to be subject. And, according to Josephus, though after this time, succeeding and increasing calamities came upon them, yet they slept on still. They appeared to be blind to the enormity of their sins, and deaf to all the threatenings of God,—until they began to experience this "great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world, no, nor ever shall be." When these terrible calamities began to break forth upon them, then they were waked from the dust; they were called forth from the graves, or the secret places in which they had been sleeping,—they were roused from their dormancy. They came forth to a sense of their own shame, *to the resurrection of condemnation*,[1]—and suffered that dreadful punishment, of which Moses and the prophets, and the Son of God, had so repeatedly forewarned them.

And this judgment did not affect the wicked alone; it affected the faithful disciples of Jesus, too. It called *them* forth into a more full enjoyment of life and hap-

[1] The word *krisis*, rendered *damnation* in the text, is the same word that is rendered *judgment* in verse 27th, and *condemnation* in verse 24th. It signifies *judgment*, *condemnation*, and *punishment*. See Parkhurst on this word. In this case it means the same punishment that is, in Matt. xxiii. 33, called "the damnation of hell," της κρισεως της γεεννης, *the punishment of gehenna*, or of the Valley of Hinnom. The prophets had testified of a punishment to come on the Jews, which should make their city like Tophet in the Valley of Hinnom; and that Jesus meant the same temporal calamity by *the punishment of gehenna* is evident, in that he certified in the succeeding verses that all these things, these calamities, should come on *that generation of the Jews*, and should make their house unto them desolate.

pines. They had been pressed down under grievous persecutions, and the calamities of war prevailed in all the land. And when everything in the natural world appeared blackness and darkness, no doubt considerable darkness brooded over *their minds*. We know that some things which Christ said to his disciples when he was with them, they did not understand until after they were fulfilled. For instance, though he had repeatedly told them that he should be put to death, and should rise again on the third day, yet when he was crucified they were disconsolate, and understood not what he had told them, until "*The Lord had risen indeed.*" So, likewise, notwithstanding Jesus had given his disciples frequent instructions concerning this most dreadful judgment, and had engaged that they should meet deliverance, even as Daniel said, "Then shall thy people be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book," yet we may reasonably conclude that when the terrible calamities of war, pestilence, and famine, were added to the grievous persecutions they were experiencing from the hands of the Jews, they were, for a time, in great darkness and trouble. But they were all delivered from the calamities of this war; and likewise from the persecutions of the Jews. This explained and fulfilled the promises of Jesus relating to their salvation in this judgment;—and at the same time that it saved them from the principal of their temporal distresses, it of course cleared away the clouds which these evils had spread over their minds, confirmed their faith and confidence in him, raised them into *more light*, and renewed and advanced their enjoyment of gospel life and peace.

Now this important change in the condition of the disciples, so wonderfully wrought, was as properly

called their *coming forth from the graves*, through the authority of Christ, *to the resurrection of life*, as the redemption of the Jews from Babylonish captivity into their own land, was called of the Lord, by Ezekiel, *the bringing of them up from their graves, to inherit the land of Israel.* And equally striking is the declaration, *They that have done evil shall come forth to the resurrection of condemnation*, to express this effectual arousing of the wicked and unbelieving from their *graves* of secrecy and *refuge* of lies, to misery, "shame and contempt."[m]

[m] Since I published the first edition of a sermon on this passage, I have had the privilege of reading the works of Newcomb Cappe, an English divine, in which I find the same explanation given this Scripture that I have here given it. As he was a believer in the doctrine of future punishment, his prejudices would have inclined him to apply this Scripture to that subject, were it not that he felt obliged, by the clear evidence in the case, to apply it otherwise. And I think it must have been the clear evidence in the case, that led two persons, of different sentiment on the subject of future punishment, residing in distant parts of the world, and having no knowledge of each other's writings, to give this Scripture so precisely the same sense, and in a *manner* so similar. The following is his paraphrase on the two verses embraced in the passage before us, with the three preceding verses, beginning with the 25th:—"Verily I say unto you, the period is approaching, and is not far off, when, after my exaltation, they who are now insensible and inattentive to the teachings, and warnings and ministry of the Son of man, of me, in my present humble circumstances, will hear my voice, when, being constituted the *Son of God*, I shall speak from heaven, by the Holy Spirit, sent to my apostles; and they that hear shall live. (26.) For as the Father hath life in himself, and hath the power of giving life unto the dead, so hath he given to the Son the like power: he will enable him, by means of the Holy Spirit, accompanying the witnesses of his resurrection, to *quicken*, to give apprehension, sensibility, and discernment, to many who seem now to have them not, who are figuratively and spiritually dead: he will enable him to endue the converts to his gospel with the gifts of the Spirit, and thus raise them from the dead, in imparting to them new principles of life; and besides this, he will enable them to preserve their natural lives in the approaching desolations of their country: thus will the Father honor him whom ye calumniate and reject. (27.) Nevertheless, it is not for such gracious purposes alone, that I am ordained unto a kingdom; though I am a *Son of man*, low as I now am, and undistinguished from among the common of mankind, I am appointed also to judge, and to execute judgment

But my readers may wish to be informed of the *proof* that the prophetic declaration of the text, with such interpretation as has now been given it, was ever fulfilled by corresponding *fact*. Were the disciples of Jesus preserved during those tribulations which destroyed their oppressors? And were they preserved unto such circumstances as constituted a resurrection or deliverance from their preceding state of trouble and persecution?—The history of the Christian church furnishes us with a satisfactory answer to this inquiry.

The *believing* or *Christian* Jews, *were* preserved through the destruction which came on their country. "It was under the government of St. Simon," says Tillemont, "that the (Christian) Jews left Jerusalem by God's order, before that city was besieged in the year 70, and withdrew beyond Jordan into the city of Pella."[a] And their lives were not preserved unto

upon this untoward generation. (28, 29.) Let not what I say amaze you; suffer not yourselves to be lost in groundless hesitating and unprofitable wonder: believe me, for it is true, not only that the hour is very near at hand, when some who are now perfectly inattentive, and insensible to my call, shall hear the voice in which I will address them, from my approaching state of exaltation, and being obedient thereto, shall live; but it is alike true that though farther off, yet the time is at no great distance, within the compass of this present generation, when all that now are in the graves, who at present sit in darkness and the shadow of death, the whole body of the Jewish people, shall hear the voice of the Son of God, summoning them to judgment; and being then at length all awakened to perceive who and what he is, shall come forth out of their present state of darkness and ignorance, to a new state of mind, to a resurrection, which to those who have been obedient to the calls of Providence, shall issue in the preservation of their lives, amidst the calamities which shall overwhelm their country; to those who have refused to hearken to them, shall issue in their condemnation, to fall among them that fall, and to take their share in all the bitterness of the calamities that are hastening to involve this country." Cappe's Works, vol. i., pp. 322—325. Such is the agreement of Cappe's opinion with the view which we have offered on this Scripture.

[a] Till. Eccl. Mem., vol. ii., p. 145,—referring to Eusebius, lib. de Demonstratione Evangelica; Paris, 1627, 3 c. 5, p. 124.

continued persecutions and tribulations, but unto the promised season of rest and peace. For Tillemont adds, that, "after the destruction of Jerusalem, the Christians returned thither, and appeared with reputation by reason of a great number of prodigies and miracles, so that the church of Jesus Christ flourished again there, being composed of a great number of Jews, who had embraced the faith, and thus continued until the city was destroyed again in the last years of Adrian." The last years of Adrian were about A. D. 139, which makes the time when the Jewish Christians had the peaceful occupancy of Judea and Jerusalem, after the dispersion of their nation, to be more than 60 years.

Gibbon says, that "The Jewish Christians, who united the law of Moses with the Christian religion, remained in solitude in Pella about 60 years, enjoying the comfort of visiting the *Holy City*, which they loved and revered. They were vastly outnumbered by the Christians from Gentile nations, who rejected the Mosaic ceremonies. But under the reign of Hadrian the desperate fanaticism of the Jews filled up the measure of their calamities, and the Romans exercised the rights of victory with unusual rigor. A new city was founded on Mount Sion, privileged as a colony; and the Jewish Christians, or *Nazarenes*, by giving up their Jewish habits, enjoyed a free admission into the colony of Hadrian.[o] Of course there was then no opposition to Christians only as they were confounded with Jews. In reference to this historical fact, Jortin, in his remarks on Ecclesiastical History, on the words of Christ, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth," says, "This was literally fulfilled,

[o] *Gibbon's* Rome, vol. ii., chap. 15, p. 66.

when the believing Jews returned to their own country, after the destruction of Jerusalem."[p]

The historical researches of *Milner* have led him to the statement of the same fact. He says that, "the congregation of Christian Jews were commanded, by an oracle, revealed to the best approved among them, that before the wars began, they should depart from the city, and inhabit a village beyond Jordan, called Pella. Thither they retired, and were saved from the destruction, which soon after overwhelmed their countrymen. And in so retiring they at once observed the precept, and fulfilled the well known prophecy of their Saviour. The death of Nero, and the destruction of Jerusalem, would naturally occasion some respite to them from their sufferings; and we hear no more of their persecuted state until the reign of Domitian, the last of the Flavian family, who succeeded to the empire in the year 81. He does not appear to have raged against the Christians, till the latter end of his reign."[q]

But concerning the Christian church in general, there is no account of any persecution against it, after the destruction of Jerusalem, until that of Domitian, A. D. 95. Fleury, who seems to be particular to mention all the *troubles* of the church, even those which *tradition* reported, makes mention of none before this; and this he represents as "short, and not violent."[r] Milner says, that "Nerva, Domitian's successor, published a pardon for those who were condemned for impiety, recalled those who were banished, and forbade the accusing of any man on account of impiety or Judaism. Others, who were under accusation, or

[p] Jort. Rem. vol. i, p. 72. [q] Miln. Ch. Hist., vol. i. p. 104.
[r] *Fleu.* Eccl. Hist., vol. i., b. 2, pp. 151—2—3.

under sentence of condemnation, now escaped by the lenity of Nerva. This brings us to the close of the century, in which we behold the Christians, for the present, in a state of external peace."

Thus it is abundantly shown in history, that the prophecy of our Lord, with the application which all the circumstances we have considered require us to make of it, has been wonderfully fulfilled. During the rage of those calamities which overthrew the Jewish nation, the Christians were preserved. And after that event, the Jews having lost the power, and perhaps in a measure their *disposition* to molest them, the Christians enjoyed a considerable season of undisturbed rest from persecution. They enjoyed a season of at least *twenty-five years* of quietude, without molestation, from the year 70, when the Jews' overthrow was consummated, to the year 95, the commencement of Domitian's persecution. And with the exception of this light persecution of about one year's continuance, the time of rest to the Christian church extended to between *thirty* and *forty years*, which probably ran out the natural lives of all who became followers of Christ when he ministered on earth, and of most of those who espoused his cause in season to share with his disciples in the persecutions which preceded the destruction of Jerusalem.

When the Christians had witnessed what their Master had before told them concerning their own sufferings in his cause, and then what he had said of that judgment which should arouse their persecutors from their graves of self-righteous security, into shame, condemnation, and destruction,—and what he had said also concerning their own preservation, and succeeding season of peace; when they had witnessed all

these things, they had an *entrance into life* of a *double nature*. They not only received a resurrection, a deliverance, from these persecutions which had threatened them with death, into the enjoyment of their natural lives in external peace and safety,[s] but these events must so have disciplined their minds, and confirmed and built up their faith, as to raise them also into a very enlarged enjoyment of the gospel religion, which is called everlasting life.[t] For though the believers had everlasting life, as in John iii. 36, yet at this time they were raised into a new and enlarged enjoyment of it. What a pleasing and wonderful fulfilment of our Saviour's prophetic declarations, one of which is contained in this text! The reader may have the satisfaction of reflecting, that he need not wrest these prophetic Scriptures from their most evident meaning, by any private interpretation, to avoid opposing them to fact.

Kind reader, a careful attention to the Scriptures, and to corresponding historical facts, has rendered the subject of our present inquiries plain and clear. The truth on this subject we have found to be worth our seeking. It enables us, in the present case, to understand the complete fulfilment of the Scripture before us, and to improve it as an "example" and "admonition," to ourselves, without cutting short the work of the Saviour, or discouraging the prayers of saints. It enables us to believe what God hath threatened, and to believe too what God hath promised; to look through the dimness of those tears, which sin, and pain, and death, have drawn from our eyes,—and behold Jesus triumphant, death swallowed up in victory,

[s] Matt. xvi. 25, 26; xxiv. 31. Luke xxi. 28.
[t] Matt. xiii. 43; xxv. 29, 46.

sin banished the universe of God, and tears wiped away from off all faces!

St. Paul treats with brevity on the subject of the resurrection, in his first letter to the Thessalonians, (iv. 13—18.) Then the succeeding chapter is commenced with these words;—"But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly, that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them."

The immediate succession of this language to the above-mentioned description of the resurrection, has led different people to different erroneous applications of the said description. Some have used it as proof that there is to be a judgment connected with the resurrection, which shall execute sudden and final destruction on a portion of our race. Others, finding the idea of wrath and destruction never connected with the immortal resurrection, have concluded that the apostle did not treat upon that subject in the preceding chapter. They have applied what is there said of the raising up of them that sleep, to the same event as is signified in the fifth of John, by the resurrection to life, and to damnation. But both these applications of the subject I take to be wrong.

In the first place, the conclusion of chapter fourth, refers evidently to the literal resurrection. The apostle says, "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others, which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so them also which sleep, in Jesus will God bring with him," (or, as Wakefield and others render it, "even so

them which sleep will God through Jesus bring with him.") "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent (μη φθασωμεν, *shall not go before*) them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and the trump of God; and the dead, in Christ shall rise first: (that is, the dead shall rise in Christ first:) then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words."

That St. Paul treats the subject of the literal resurrection of the dead in the 15th of 1 Corinthians, none will dispute. And I will now show that the passage just quoted relates to the same subject.

First;—In addressing the Corinthians, the apostle makes the resurrection of Christ the ground of the Christian hope of immortality. "If Christ is not raised, then there is no resurrection of the dead. But now *is* Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept." So here to the Thessalonians he says, "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep will God through Jesus bring with him."

Second;—To the Corinthians he represents that all who sleep or may sleep in death, shall be raised, or made alive "in Christ." So here, "Even so them which sleep will God *in or through* Jesus bring with him." And again, at verse 16th, "*The dead shall rise in Christ first.*" It has commonly been taken to mean that there is a certain class of the deceased, including such as had been righteous on earth, who are

called *the dead in Christ*, and who will rise before the rest of the dead. But on close observation, it will be seen that there is but one class of the dead spoken of, and that is the deceased of mankind as a species. "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep,"—i. e. the human dead. Again, "Even so *them also which sleep*," i. e. the dead in general, spoken of above, "in Jesus will God bring with him." And yet again, "*The dead*, in Christ shall rise first." And what next? Is there another class of the dead to be raised afterwards? Nothing is said of any such fact. The next thing mentioned is, "Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds." So, then, "them which sleep," in verses 13, 14, and "the dead," in verse 16, are all who are to be subjects of the resurrection of which the apostle here testifies, except those who shall be alive on the earth at the completion of the resurrection work. And by placing the comma after the word dead, in verse 16, "the dead, in Christ shall rise first," or "the dead shall rise in Christ first," the sentiment is made to be in perfect agreement with that to the Corinthians, "Even so in Christ shall all be made alive."

Third;—The apostle to the Corinthians represents that all the dead shall be raised, before the last of the living shall be made immortal. "For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and (then) we shall be changed." So here to the Thessalonians, "For we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord, *shall not go before them* which are asleep. For *the dead* shall rise in Christ first, (before the living are changed,) then we which

are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds."

Thus is this apostle's description of the resurrection, which he gives to the Thessalonians, in exact agreement, in all prominent points, with that given to the Corinthians. And I can find no way by which I can lawfully apply them to different subjects.

So likewise is the *character* of the resurrection described to the Thessalonians, indicated as being the same as that ascribed to it in the letter to the Corinthians. It is represented as being altogether a subject of grateful hope. "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others, which have no hope." The hope here spoken of is not a hope for one's self in particular. When the members of certain sects speak of their having "obtained a hope," they mean by it a hope for themselves, to which they think that something they have done or felt, entitles them. But the Christian's hope spoken of in the Scriptures, is not a mere selfish hope. It is a hope for man. And in this case, the hope spoken of is for deceased friends. The heathen sorrowed for the dead without hope, and employed extravagant expressions of anguish, and acts of self-torture. But the apostle would have his believing brethren to know, that this hopeless sorrow for the dead, was from ignorance of their allotment. He would have them to understand the gospel doctrine of immortality, that they might be comforted concerning the deceased.

Let it be considered here, that these Thessalonian Christians had the dearest friends and relations of life, who were in the heathen state of unbelief, and were, one after another, dying in that state. Did the

gospel give them no hope for such? Perhaps when this letter was received from the inspired apostle, and the brethren were called together to hear it read, some pious believing daughter had just closed the eyes of a fond and doating mother, who died without the light of Christ. She hears these words of kindness and love, "I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep; that ye *sorrow not*, even as others, which have no hope." Could she draw consolation from these words of truth? Could she have hope for that dear departed mother? According to modern creeds, she could have no hope from her gospel faith, to soothe her sorrows for her dearest friend asleep. But the ministry of the primitive gospel bade her sorrow not, but rejoice in hope. Did the Christian apostle mean to have his brethren harden their hearts to cold indifference for all their friends who were not believers with them? Such were a majority of their earthly friends. Would their Christian teacher have them comforted *without hope* for them? Were the sorrows, which he feared they would indulge, alone for deceased Christians, in utter forgetfulness and indifference for the great mass of their friends who had fallen asleep? I should tremble, in the conscious guilt of blasphemy, to harbor the thought for a moment. The Christian spirit is love and affection for all. And with regard to *them who are asleep*, without any limitation or reserve, the apostle would have us not to be so ignorant of their destiny as to sorrow on their account, but to cherish for them a consoling hope. For since Christ died, and rose again, so them also which sleep, will God through Jesus bring again from the dead. And everywhere has the apostle had it understood, that the

resurrection from the dead is an introduction into a higher and better state.

If any still contend that the glorious and desirable resurrection, described in the passage we have now been considering, and also in that to the Corinthians, includes but a part of the human dead, I will remark that the conclusion of the latter argument referred to, brings to a settlement this question, and that forever. At the event of the resurrection which he there discusses, "shall be fulfilled the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." And then the triumphant shout is raised, "O death, where is thy sting? O hades, (state of death,) where is thy victory?" Here we have the most positive and decisive assurance, that not a single victim shall then remain in hades, or under the power of death. The subjects, then, of that blessed resurrection, to an immortal, incorruptible, spiritual, heavenly, and glorious state of being, are, as we have seen before, the great Adamic family.

But why should the apostle say, (1 Thess. v. 1—3) in the next paragraph succeeding that which we have quoted on the resurrection, that the day of the Lord should come as a thief in the night, and bring sudden destruction upon them? I answer, he changes his subject. By due attention to this portion of his epistle, you will perceive that the apostle is not here engaged in a continuous argument, but delivers short paragraphs, on different subjects. He commences chapter 4th with exhortations touching the connubial relation, and common honesty. At verse 9th, he changes the subject, with the disjunctive *but*,—"But as touching brotherly love, ye have no need that I write unto *you*." Then, after a few remarks upon their own

knowledge and practice on this point, he changes the subject again, with the same disjunctive,—"But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep." And after the brief instruction he gives upon the topic of the resurrection, he again changes the subject in the same manner as before,—"But of the times and seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you. For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them." Here the subject is professedly and distinctly changed from the resurrection of the dead, to the times and events which were to be observed as signs of a notable day of the Lord for which they should be looking. On some, that day should bring swift destruction. Jesus had described it thus:—"But as the days of Noe were, so shall the coming of the Son of man be. For as in the days that were before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered the ark; and knew not until the flood came and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left."[a] And again,—"When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them that are in Judea flee to the mountains. —For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. For there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be carried away captive into all nations. And

[a] Matt. xxiv. 37—40.

there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity;—men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth; for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. *And they shall see the Son of man coming in a cloud, with power and great glory.* And he spake to them a parable; Behold the fig-tree, and all the trees; when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own-selves that summer is now nigh at hand. So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, ye know that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass away till all be fulfilled."[v]

This is the day of the Lord, the coming of which was nigh when Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, and the coming of which would be attended with sudden destruction upon the principal enemies of the gospel. But no such descriptions are applied to the resurrection of the dead.

It will be borne in mind, that for the very reason that this notable day of the Lord should come as a thief in the night, in judgment upon the Jewish nation, it deeply concerned the leading enemies of Christ at Thessalonica. For these leading opposers were Jewish citizens, who had a synagogue there, and who, when Paul and Silas were preaching there, stirred up the baser sort to drive them from the city. And the judgment of that day affected not only the Jews in Jerusalem, but in all the provinces abroad. They became weak and degraded, and crushed beneath the feet of the Gentiles, everwhere.

Of this judgment the apostle reminded the Thessa-

[v] Luke xxi. 29—32.

lonians again, in his second epistle. He assured his Christian brethren there, that though they were then suffering persecutions and tribulations from the hardened unbelieving Jews, yet God would recompense tribulation to those troublesome opposers, and give the Christians rest from their persecutions, when the Lord Jesus should be revealed from heaven in the working of that power which had been foretold, which should, as by the rage of fire, punish them with *aionion* destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power.[w] The prophet had described the political destruction of that people in similar terms. "And I will cast you out of my sight, as I have cast out all your brethren, even the whole seed of Ephraim."[x] Again, —"Therefore, behold, I, even I, will utterly forget you, and I will forsake you, and the city that I gave you and your fathers, and cast you out of my presence; and I will bring an everlasting reproach upon you, and a perpetual shame, which shall not be forgotten."[y] It will not be disputed that these prophecies relate to the temporal dispersion of Israel. The destruction of their city and temple,—their deprivation of the Divine favor which they had enjoyed in their worship there, where dwelt the symbols of Jehovah's presence,—and their slavish captivity among the heathen, were represented by the Lord's casting them out of his sight, and out of his presence. And so did the apostle, when that calamity was near, describe it as a "destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." But, I repeat it, these various judgments have no connection with that grand and stupendous event, which shall swallow up death in the victory of life immortal.

[w] 2 Thess. i. 3—10. [x] Jer. vii. 15. [y] Jer. xxiii. 39, 40.

"*Resurrection of the Just.*"

When Jesus was invited to eat bread at the house of a chief Pharisee, and he saw some who were bidden choosing out the chief rooms, he put forth a parable unto them, saying: "When thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room, that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher; then shalt thou have worship of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that abaseth himself shall be exalted."

"Then said he also to him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, nor thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors, lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the lame, the maimed, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; *for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.*" (Luke xiv. 8—14.)

Those Christians who are in the habit of referring men to the future state of existence for the rewards of all, even the most trivial performances in life, employ this text as a support to such doctrine. They suppose that our Lord here teaches that, for even calling the poor to a feast, we shall be rewarded in the resurrection world;—that the account of all our actions here, shall be settled and balanced there. Now

in favor of such an application of this text, I can see no authority, but there is much against it.

First;—There is nothing said here about a resurrection from the dead to immortal life. The text says, "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection (or rising) of the just." It does not say that it shall be at their rising from *hades*, or the state of death, but simply their *rising;* and what rising is meant must be determined by the connection, and the nature of the subject.

The word here rendered *resurrection* is *anasasis*, which Parkhurst defines to signify—

1. *A standing on the feet again*, or *rising*, as opposed to falling. It occurs, though figuratively, in this view, Luke ii. 34: "And Simon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and *rising* again of many in Israel."

2. *A rising or resurrection of a dead body to life*, as in Heb. xi. 35: "Women received their dead *raised* to life again."

3. *A rising or resurrection* of the body from the grave; both of Christ, and of men in general." He adds that this word occurs twice in the Greek of the Old Testament, "in both which it signifies *to rise, to stand up.*" These two cases are, Lam. iii. 62: "The lips of those that *rose* up against me;" and Zeph. iii. 8: "Therefore wait ye upon me, saith the Lord, until the day that I RISE up to the prey."

Hence it is seen that the word resurrection in the text simply denotes a *rising*. The original word from which it is translated, is used with all the variety of application with which we use the word *rise*,—whether it is a rising from a seat, or from obscurity to eminence, or from inactivity to action, or from literal

death to life. Consequently, the bare occurrence of the word *anasasis*, or *rising*, in this case, does not prove that the rising meant is from literal death. In conversation on a politician who has become unpopular, should one say, "He is down," and another rejoin, "He will rise again," you would not understand him to speak of a rising into immortality:—the subject of the discourse would determine it otherwise. And so does the subject of discourse connected with this passage, as we shall shortly see, determine otherwise concerning the meaning of the word resurrection in it.

Second;—The application of this Scripture to the future world, is opposed to the general teachings of the Bible on the reward of our virtues, and on the tenor of the resurrection life. It would indeed be beneath the dignity of the subject, and beneath the dignity of our Lord, to refer men to the immortal state for the recompense even of making a dinner for their poorer neighbors,—a recompense which it is at the same time said that their richer neighbors might themselves make them in the present world. And if it is in the future world that men are to be rewarded for all their good deeds done on earth, that state will not be free from cause of boasting, and even of envy. There will be an infinite variety of condition in heaven, corresponding to the nature and number of good deeds here. And as it was shown under the head of "objections," to chapter ninth, if there is no condition in the future world but what is to be expected on the score of recompense for deeds in the present, those who die in infancy, having done neither good nor evil, will be allotted to no condition at all.

But this habit of making up the future heavenly

state, out of the matters of recompense for human works below, so fraught with absurdities, and so at variance with the usual teachings of the Holy Scriptures, has no sanction from the words of Christ before us. I have shown that the original word for *resurrection*, in this case, simply means a *rising;* and a rising *from* what, and *to* what, must be determined by the nature of the subject.

And now, by consideration of the subject itself, I will proceed to exhibit what I regard as the meaning of our Lord, by *the rising of the just.* "Then said he unto him that bade him, When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbors; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompense be made thee." The recompense here meant is the return of a similar favor. The rich were just as well able to make a feast for him, as he was to make one for them; therefore his bidding such was a mere act of courtesy, and not of benevolence.

"But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee."—Here is something to be expected in calling the poor and needy, which was not mentioned in the case of calling the rich,—a *blessing.* "And thou shalt be *blessed*, for they cannot recompense thee." There was nothing said of a reward for calling the rich, other than the return of a similar expression of respect from them. But there is a peculiar blessing, a generous pleasure, a noble and heartfelt satisfaction, in the exercise of the principle of benevolence, in the doing of needed good to our fellow-creatures. Hence Jesus assured the Pharisee, that by cultivating that spirit of

benevolence which would call the poor unto his table, he should be *blessed*. And then a *recompense*, or return of similar favors, of like temporal good as he had bestowed, might as a general thing be expected. "Thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." That is, when the just, the virtuous poor, *rise*, their circumstances change, and they come to promotion,—and when you shall stand in need,—then you will receive the like favors from others, which you had imparted to them. For it is delivered as a general truth by the Saviour, that "with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again."

But some may object to this view, and say that it must be incorrect, because it makes Christ affect to offer the people a better motive of action than they practised in their custom of calling in the rich, and yet offers them the same motive at last for calling in the poor, viz., the prospect of a recompense. But if this were an objection, it would bear with equal force against any view which can be offered on this passage. For it cannot be pretended that Christ did not offer the assurance of a *recompense* for calling in the poor, as well as for calling in the rich. This fact is not changed by carrying the promised recompense into the future world.

But this subject of *recompense* is not the point of difference on which Jesus here laid stress, with regard to the calling of the rich or poor. It cannot be disputed that a recompense is to be expected in both cases. But the preference which is given to the act of calling in and giving meat to the poor and needy, is, that it is a deed of present charity. The rich do not at present need it, but the poor do; and therefore

by feeding them, you relieve distress, and do a deed of charity in which you shall feel to be "blessed." And then, further to encourage his host, the rich Pharisee, to such acts of benevolence, in relief of those who were unable then to recompense him as the rich might do, he assured him that in addition to the blessedness of doing good, he should receive returns of temporal favor, and that too at a time when he might find himself in greater need.

It is a truth, which was especially applicable to those ancient ages, that the *righteous* were at times liable to be pressed down in regard to their external condition; but that it could not long at a time remain so, for by the order of the administration of God's government, the righteous poor would soon rise, and then, in those times of perpetual fluctuations in communities, their wicked oppressors would be brought down. But when the righteous poor were risen, they would remember in liberal return of favor, those of the rich who had remembered them in their poverty.

This sentiment is contained in the preaching of Solomon, (Eccl. xi. 1, 2;) "Cast thy bread upon the waters; for thou shalt find it after many days." That is, be prudentially charitable, and you shall not be losers, but shall at some day find a return of the good you do. "Give a portion to seven, and also to eight; for thou knowest not what evil shall be upon the earth." That is, by the changes and revolutions that are going on in the earth, you who are now able to *give*, may be in need to *receive;* and they who now need to receive from you, may be able to bestow upon you their favors.

There was a time in that age in which our Lord

was upon earth, when there was a remarkable resurrection, (*anasasis*,) or *rising* of the just; and at the same time there was a wonderful *fall* of that corrupt people, the unbelieving Jews. And it appears from what followed upon Christ's pronouncing the words of the text in question, that he here had some reference to that event.—"And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God." Upon which Jesus spoke a parable, relating to the rejection of the gospel by the haughty Jews, and to its reception by the poor and maimed, the publicans and sinners in the highways and hedges. And the parable further taught, that at the coming of the kingdom of God, (which should be in that generation,) these just ones, the obedient poor, would rise to safety, peace, and plenty, when the disobedient and proudly rich should be cast down. Thus many who were then alive when this conversation was had with Jesus, did live to enjoy the blessedness of eating bread in the kingdom of God.

Our Lord, in a passage referred to in the preceding division of this chapter, speaking of the events of the judgment of that age, adds, "And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh." That is, the redemption of the disciples from the grievous calamities of war and persecution, then drew nigh. The just were soon to rise and prosper. He proceeds, "So likewise ye, when ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the *kingdom of God* is nigh at hand." Here the more firm establishment and wide extension of the gospel of Christ's kingdom, and the state of rest and peace of the Christian church, which

should succeed the destruction of the Jewish polity, is called the coming of the kingdom of God.

Hence, though the disciples of Christ were then mostly of the poor, yet the *rich* who should receive Christ's cause, and practise the benevolent principles which he enjoined, though the poor could not recompense them at that time for their deeds of charity, should yet find their recompense at the rising of the just, which in that generation was brought to pass.

The general lesson unto which we are to improve this subject is, that we shall be blessed in doing good; that virtue, though it may at certain times seem to be oppressed, shall rise and prosper. And that he who does good to those who need it, may himself, in a change of conditions, both need and receive the same favors from them who have shared of his kindness. The benevolent and upright in heart, have the assurance from God, that "their place of defence shall be the munition of rocks, their bread shall be given them, and their waters shall be sure."

## *What shall be Raised?*

It is thought by some essential to the true faith of the esurrection, to believe that this earthly body is to be raised. Painful descriptions have been given, of scattered limbs and fragments of the old body flying from different parts of the globe, to meet and take their places in the formation of the heavenly man. And when it has been asked how the same particles of matter which composed the body of each at death, shall go to compose the new body in the resurrection, since the body of one, in cannibal tribes, may have served as food to another, and thus the same particles

have belonged to different bodies at death,—the difficulty has been answered by the sweeping remark, "There is nothing impossible with God."

We know there is nothing impossible with God, which does not involve absurdity or wrong. God cannot deny himself; and he cannot make a thing, at the same time, to be and not to be. It is easy to conceive that the same particles which compose, in part, the body of an individual when he dies, may be a component part of another at a subsequent date. But that the same particle of matter should, *at the same time*, constitute parts of different bodies, is impossible in the nature of things.

But the resurrection of the gross earthly body, is not a Scriptural doctrine. That which is raised is not that which was deposited in the sepulchre, or grave. The resurrection is a deliverance from *hades*, the state of the dead, and not from *mnemeia*, the tombs. We have remarked in another division of this chapter, that there are thousands of the human race who were never interred in *mnemeia*, or graves; but all go to *hades*. This word is never used in the plural; it is significant of one state, in which, as Job says, "are the small and great, and the servant is free from his master." "There the prisoners rest together, and they hear not the voice of the oppressor." Joseph was supposed by his father to have been devoured by an evil beast. No sepulchre contained the ashes of his mortal body. But he was in *hades*, whither Jacob expected to go and meet him. When the witch of Endor was requested to bring up Samuel, she did not go to the sepulchre of his body to divine over that, nor was there the least idea of disturbing his mouldering mortal frame. The state of the dead was supposed to be

a subterranean region, and it was the *manes* of Samuel that was expected to be brought up. It was supposed to be a conscious, yet dreamy state; and Samuel is represented as saying to Saul, "Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring me up."[1] From this state it was supposed to be *up*, to any point of the earth's surface.

I do not refer to this case of divination, as authoritative revelation touching the state of the dead. Indeed the very use of the word *sheol*, or *hades*, in application to it, denoted that it was an unrevealed, unknown, hidden state. I have no doubt of the truth of the account referred to, as a simple narrative of what transpired in relation to Saul. He was not in a situation to scrutinize the transactions himself, and the woman knew enough of his circumstances to predict with great safety, what would be the result of the morrow's battle. Either she contrived to manage the case successfully with the dejected, credulous king, or God saw fit to interpose with his warning to the unrighteous monarch. But this is not to our present point. My design in referring to this and other cases is to show, that when the Scriptures speak of persons in *hades*, or the state of death, they speak not of the body in the tomb, but of the intellectual and moral nature, the mind, the spirit,—or the individual as a personal identity. These personal identities the people of Old Testament times conceived of as existing, though in a state of which they formed no clear conception. And when there were prophetic breathings, (as there were at sundry times) of the sentiments of hope for a resurrection of the dead, it was of a reorganization of these dreamy *manes*, to bring them up into perfect active being. Hence the accomplishment of

[1] 1 Sam. xxviii. 15.

such a rising of the dead was not denominated the destruction of the tombs, but of *hades*. "I will ransom them from the power of *hades*, I will redeem them from death: O death, I will be thy plagues; O *hades*, I will be thy destruction."[a]

This is the view which St. Paul gives on the point under consideration. In his labored argument on the resurrection, from which we have already derived so rich instruction, he raises an objection for the opposer. "But some men will say, How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" The question is not, How are the dead *bodies* raised up? and with what body shall the dead *bodies* appear? The dead are conceived of in a personal capacity, as spirits, (whether dreamily conscious, or unconscious, it affects not the present argument,) and the question is proposed, How shall they be reörganized into tangible active beings? and with what body shall they be clothed?

The objection was designed to imply, on the part of the opposer, that as the mortal body was mouldered away, the resurrection of the dead was incredible, as they had no bodies to be raised in. But the apostle replies,—"Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die; and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat or some other grain; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed its own body." That is, to each seed is given that body which belongs to its species.

The sense of this figure is to the point. The old body of the germinating seed dies, and is not raised again. There is a spirit, a germ of the seed, that

[a] Hos. xiii. 14.

lives, and constitutes its identity in species with the seed sown. But it hath a new body, as God has been pleased, by the laws of his creation, to give it. But the figure is not to be applied in all its points, nor are figures generally. Figures and comparisons are only meant to be applied in those prominent points which are brought to bear directly upon the subject in question. The purpose of the apostle in the use of this figure was, to teach that the old body will not be raised in the resurrection, but that God will give us new bodies. There is another fact in the case of the grain, viz., that the new body, though not the former hull raised up, is *like* the former. But this point the apostle did not intend to have applied to his subject. Nay, he guards against such an application, by proceeding directly to explain, that the resurrection body of man shall be *different* from the earthly body. Enumerating different descriptions of bodies, one of which differs from another in glory, he adds,—"So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power: it is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. Howbeit, that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual."

So then, as God has, out of these grosser elements, organized bodies for us here, adapted to the purposes of our being in this earthly state,—he will, of refined ethereal substance, organize for us new and glorious bodies, better adapted to the legitimate developments of mind, and fitted for the heavenly state of being. And then, though we shall inherit new and immortal bodies, we

shall be the same identical persons, knowing ourselves to be the same, raised into a higher and better life. That which constituted the *man* on earth, shall constitute the *man* in heaven.

The conscious identity of the person depends not on a connexion with the same particles of matter. There is a continual waste of the physical system, which is supplied by other matter digested from the aliments received. By this process, all the gross substances of the body are changed every few years, and we have literally new bodies. Yet the *person*, the *man*, is identically and consciously the same. And so he will be when God shall give him a heavenly body.

There is a beautiful expression of this sentiment in Paul's Second Epistle to the Corinthians. (v. 1—4.) "For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven; if so be that, being clothed, we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life." This is the same subject that was treated in the former Epistle to that church, in chapter fifteenth. The result he there described by the saying, "Death is swallowed up in victory;" and the language describing the same in this passage is, "That mortality might be swallowed up of life." And here is the same distinction made between the person and the body, as in the other case. The body is represented under the figure of a house. This mortal body is called an earthly house which *shall* be dissolved; and the resurrection body is called

a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. And there is no intimation that the latter house was to be composed of the ashes of the former. By this resurrection, it is not the tomb, but *hades*, that shall be deprived of its victory. For, as we have had occasion repeatedly to observe before, at the consummation of this glorious resurrection work, the joyful shout of triumph shall be raised, "O hades, where is thy victory?"

There are a few expressions in the apostolical writings which have been thought to indicate the rising of these earthly bodies;—Such, for instance, as "This corruptible shall put on incorruption; and this mortal shall put on immortality." And again, "Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things to himself."[b] These passages have been thought to mean, that these mortal bodies shall be made immortal. But the expression is the same as that which closes the sketch of the resurrection in chapter fourth of Second Corinthians, viz., "That mortality might be swallowed up of life. Whereas in the very sketch thus closed, it is distinctly stated that, "If the earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved," (not if it were raised, but if it were *dissolved*,) we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." And the apostle would be unclothed of this earthly tabernacle, not that he might be naked, but clothed upon with the heavenly body. Hence it is obvious that the sayings referred to, of this corruptible putting on incorruption, and this vile body being fashioned like unto his glorious body, are but brief and

[b] Phil. iii. 21.

comprehensive expressions of the idea, that we, who here exist in a mortal constitution, shall hereafter be made, as it respects the entire being, immortal and glorious.

The resurrection of the earthly body of Christ has been employed as an argument for the rising of the mortal bodies of mankind. But we are nowhere informed that this circumstance was designed to inculcate such a lesson. His rising from the dead, into life, was designed as demonstrative proof of the resurrection of our race. But the work of decomposition had not commenced in his body, and it was necessary that he should resume that body for the then present, as a witness to the fact of his real resurrection. I have no doubt that the mind, or spirit, organized in a heavenly body adapted to its full developments, can recognize spirit by mental discernment. I have tested clairvoyant experiments, to know that the mind, even here, may be placed in a position so to exercise its powers, as to recognize other minds. But it was necessary that Jesus, after his resurrection, should be recognized by the bodily organs, the physical senses of his friends. Otherwise they could not have been duly qualified witnesses of his resurrection. Their testimony may have passed with the ghost stories of the times. Even for themselves, they could not have determined, by their natural faculties, that their very Master had indeed come forth from the dead. It will be recollected that his own apostles needed to see for themselves that it was the person, in very form, with whom they had been acquainted; and some of them must needs examine the nail-prints in his hands. By such personal examination, they were qualified to go forth with the bold language of John;—"That which

was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and show unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;) that which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you."[c]

Since, then, the coming forth from the tomb of the earthly body of Jesus, was indispensably necessary for the purpose just explained, and also, as I may have added, to take from his enemies their expected argument for his imposture, by showing his body in their own possession after the third day from his death,—and since the circumstance was never applied by his witnesses to any other purpose, we have no authority to argue from it further. Who, indeed, expects to see Jesus in the heavenly state, with the nail-prints forever in his hands and feet, and the perforation of the soldier's spear in his side? Yet this may as well be argued from the fact of his showing them to his disciples, and even that his being raised with those wounds is proof that men will be raised with their bodily scars and deformities, as that the coming forth of his body from the sepulchre is proof that our fleshly bodies shall be raised. To us it is obvious that this appearance on earth for the space of forty days after his resurrection, was not that of his glorified body; for then "would his face have shone like the sun, and his raiment have been white as the light."[d] And should any ask what became of the crucified body, upon his ascension on high,—let it be considered, that the power which has formed the

[c] 1 John i. 1—3. [d] Matt. xvii. 2.

gross substances of our bodies from the arcana of the elements, even the power which raised up Christ from the dead, could dissipate those substances again at pleasure.

*Shall we know each other in Heaven?*

By some, this question has been regarded as one of trifling importance; but with me it involves the chief interest of the future life. If we know not one another, we shall not know ourselves: and to talk to me of my being raised into another life, where I shall neither recognize myself nor the loved ones of earth, would be but to mock my hopes. It would be but to promise, what the infidel and atheist believes, a succession of *other* beings, when we are no more. The recognition of ourselves and of one another in the future life, is essentially and necessarily involved in the Scripture doctrine of the resurrection. The life from the dead which is promised, is *our* life, and that of our *fellow-beings*;—so that we should be comforted concerning our friends who are fallen asleep, through the hope that they shall live with us, and we with them, in a life immortal. But if we are not to possess conscious identity there, then *we* have no future life, though God may create other grades of beings after us. On this point, I can see no ground for a question.

On the doctrine of personal identity in the future life, is also founded the argument which reconciles with the wisdom of God, the allotment to man of this mortal existence. If mankind are to enter the future life ignorant of having existed before, then why might they not have been made immortal at first? For how then can they be advantaged by the weaknesses, the

sorrows and trials of earth, and by passing down into the valley of death? How then can they admire a crucified and risen Saviour?—and how shall they praise God for their deliverance from the bondage of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the children of God? Indeed, the idea of our recognition of ourselves and one another in heaven, is inseparably interwoven with all the Scripture teachings of a future life,—with all the consolations of experimental hope,—with the familiar intercourse of Jesus with his friends after his resurrection,—with the fact that even in his glorified state he "knows how to be touched with the feeling of our infirmities,"*—and with all the visits of angelic servants of God from the spirit-land, bespeaking a sympathetic interest for men, and bearing for us messages of love.

Does any object to this doctrine of personal identity in heaven, on the ground that a remembrance of the doings and incidents of the mortal life, may be a source of eternal guilt and suffering? If the objector is a Christian, let him review the revealed doctrines of the gospel, and he will find among them such an operation as *the forgiveness of sins.* This subject is explained in chapter seventh of this work. It comprises the idea of a deliverance from sin, and a freedom from its sting; the restoration of the sinner on his reformation, to the privileges of the righteous. Let him look at the brethren of Joseph, when they had fully comprehended how the Lord overruled their evil for good,—at St. Paul, when his soul had become imbued with the spirit of him whom he had persecuted with madness,—and at the distinguishing spirit and purpose of the gospel, through which God is in

* Heb. iv. 15.

Christ reconciling the world unto himself, "*not imputing their trespasses unto them;*"[1] and in the light derived from these sources, he will perceive, that though we shall never take pride in a remembrance of our own past errors, but shall learn hence humility, —yet God may give to our memory some better employment, amidst all the great things he hath done for us, than to serve forever as a mere accuser.

### *On the Time of the Resurrection.*

Whether there shall be a simultaneous resurrection of all men from the dead on some unknown future day, or whether the work is going on progressively, is a question on which there is a diversity of opinions among different sects of Christians. As it is a mere question of time, in relation to a work which belongs to God alone, it does not appear to have been made a special subject of revelation. The Scriptures teach that man shall live again, and that, too, in a life which shall never end. In this cheerful hope, we are required to do as Jesus did, commend our spirits into the Father's hand. Our first waking moment will be, to us, the next to that wherein we shall have fallen asleep.

But though this question does not appear to be specially and designedly answered by revelation, yet there seem to be some remarks and facts incidentally given, which may have a bearing upon it. The conversation of Jesus with the Sadducees, though applied directly to the *fact* of a future life, seems in some of its circumstances to involve the idea of a progressive esurrection. He said unto them, "And as touching the dead that they rise, have ye not read in the book of

[1] 2 Cor. v. 19.

Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying. I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err."[g] True, it is urged on the other side, that this is spoken in the sense in which God "calleth those things which be not as though they were." But the language most naturally comports with the idea of a regular administration of God, in raising man to a higher life. And so in the very passage just referred to is this idea uppermost:—"As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations, before him whom he believed, even God, *who quickeneth the dead*, and calleth those things which be not as though they were."[h] Here the quickening of the dead is spoken of as a common work with Jehovah.

And the language of St. Paul in one of the passages which were adduced to another point, seems applicable here:—"For we know, that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. Not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the body we are absent from the Lord: for we walk by faith, not by sight: (that is, our enjoyment of Christ's presence is by faith, not by personally seeing him as he is;) we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord." In this case, the apostle seems very clearly to express the sentiment,

[g] Mark xii. 26, 27. [h] Rom. iv. 17.

that when he should be unclothed of the earthly body, he should be successively clothed upon with the heavenly; that when he should be absent from the body, he should be present with the Lord.

The same sentiment is expressed with equal clearness, in the letter to the Philippian church;—(i. 21—24;) "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live in the flesh, this is the fruit of my labor; yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful to you." Now such apostolical language as this, seems utterly incompatible with the idea of a suspension of the work of life for many ages, before rising to be with Christ. And when Jesus spake to his disciples of going from them, referring to his passing through death, and rising, and going to the Father, upon his saying to them, as he had said to the Jews, "Whither I go ye cannot come,"[1] Peter proposed the inquiry, "Whither goest thou?" And "Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards." This does not, to be sure, describe the length of time afterwards to the coming of his disciples into the heavenly world: but the familiar idea expressed is that of a proper succession of events.

I will add, that the translation of Enoch and Elijah are incidents which favor the view that the introduction of man into the heavenly state, as into the present world, is a progressive work. So is the remark of the angel to John,—the angel whom Christ sent to communicate to him the appropriate revelation. When John fell down to worship before the

[1] John xiii. 36.

feet of the angel who showed him these things, then said the angel unto him, "See thou do it not; for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book."[j] He was one of the prophets raised from the dead. And the disciples in the vision of the transfiguration, saw Moses and Elias talking with the Son of man.[k]

It is conceded that St. Paul's description of the resurrection, in 1 Cor. xv., and 1 Thess. iv., treat of it as if it were to be a simultaneous work, altogether in future time. But to my mind, the evidence, though chiefly incidental, which is presented on the other side, may warrant the conclusion that in these two instances, where the resurrection was made the entire subject of discourse, the apostle adopted the strong and unqualified style of those chapters as a convenient testimony of the work as a whole. In relation to a great purpose which is in progress, when a bold testimony to its certainty, and description of its full consummation is given, it is natural to throw it into the future tense, and to treat it as *one* event, without distinction of periods in its progress.

The most plausible objection to the belief of a progressive resurrection, admitting it to have commenced in the former ages, is in the fact that Christ is denominated the first-fruits of them that slept. But it is certain, however, that he raised several of the literally and really dead in his own lifetime, which was before his own resurrection. The facts too, which we have adduced, concerning Enoch, Elijah, Moses, Elias, and the angel who was one of the former prophets, are all in our memory. If these are to have the weight we

[j] Rev. xxii. 9. [k] Matt. xvii. 3.

have allowed them, then Christ as the first-fruits of them that slept, is to be understood of the order of rank, rather than of time,—being the One appointed of God as the head of the heavenly state, and as the One to rise from the dead, in a manner, and for the purpose, to complete and establish, as a great system of revelation, the doctrine of our immortal hopes.

Finally, it is the pleasant belief of the writer, and he thinks this belief is authorized by the general concurrence of evidence in the case, and confirmed by the philosophy of all God's works, not that man shall enter upon the fully developed life immortal the next moment after physical death, but that of the principles of life there is no annihilation:—that in the work of life there are no ages of suspension;—that as it is with the insects and plants which have a second life, and with all things in God's creation which are appointed to different stages,—so with man, whose first stage is the present life;—the principles of life shall operate, unto the reorganization of the perfect man, by the progressive workings of God. With this faith we care not to know the precise time; it would have been incompatible with the purposes and the relations of our present being, to have had it given us to know what shall *immediately* succeed the moment of our decease. The idea of the successive operations, through the regenerative power of God, of the principles of life, unto the perfecting of our new and heavenly being, will accord with the sentiment of our being unclothed of this, "that we may be clothed upon of our house which is from heaven." And here we rest, in filial confidence of the dying Master,—"Father, into thy *hands I* commend my spirit."

The reader will bear in mind, that I have not been laboring to decide upon the condition of man in the intermediate state between death and the resurrection. The Hebrews used the word *sheol* for the state of the dead, to signify that it was dark, hidden, unrevealed. And the Greek *hades* is used for the same purpose. Into this state I have not seen the light of revelation shine. When Christ arose from the dead, though by his resurrection he brought the final immortal state of the human creation to light, he did not bring the state of the dead to light. He gave no account of what or where he was from his crucifixion to that time. *Hades* is *hades* still. The imaginations of some learned speculators have been there, and they have confused the minds of many more by the different reports which they have given of it. But for me the sentiment of Moses shall suffice,—"Secret things belong to God, but the things which are revealed, to ourselves and our children."

It is called "the valley of the shadow of death." When my mind has gone to the borders of this valley, the next spot on which I see the light of revelation clearly shine, is the mountain of the resurrection, over beyond this valley. And it is unto that mountain, not into this valley, that I have been directing your attention for the hope of the future.

There is one passage, however, which has been thought to contradict the assertion that hades remains hades still. It is taken by some to be a direct exposition of circumstances and transactions in *sheol*, or the intermediate state. Consequently, though it does not relate to the main subject of this chapter, yet as it is thought by others to relate to an incidental matter which we have embraced in it, I will appropriate this

place for a consideration of it. The case referred to is that of

*The Spirits in Prison.*

"*For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit, by which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison; which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water.*"[1]

Most writers of commentaries on the Scriptures, have supposed that St. Peter here spoke of Christ's preaching by his spirit through Noah, at the time the ark was preparing before the deluge. But no reason is offered for this view of the text, other than the simple fact that the circumstance of the deluge in the days of Noah is here introduced. But this circumstance is not sufficient to satisfy my mind that *Christ's preaching to the spirits in prison*, was *Noah's preaching to the antediluvians.* This preaching was ascribed to *Christ.* What was done by his apostles and ministers, whom he chose, qualified and sent out, might justly be, and often is ascribed to Christ, as if he personally did it. But I know of no apostolical usage, for applying directly to Christ the works performed by men before he came into the world. And this preaching to the spirits in prison, is ascribed directly to Christ, and is introduced as something performed after his resurrection, or being quickened by the spirit. "For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just

[1] 1 Peter iii. 18—20.

for the unjust, that he might bring us to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit, by which also *he* went and preached unto the spirits in prison." Now it is clear, that if there was any such work performed as here described, as I think I shall be able to show that there was, by Christ's own power and authority, subsequently to his being quickened by the spirit, it will be most reasonable to apply the text to such subsequent work.

Others have understood Peter to teach in this place, that the spirits of the antediluvians were in a prison of darkness, suffering punishment for their sins on earth, and that the spirit of Christ, between his death and resurrection, went down into that prison to preach to them, and to save them.

We will now examine whether it is fair to conclude that Peter designed to teach, by the words before us, as a doctrine of fear to influence our conduct, that there is a prison in which men are shut up and punished after death for the sins of this life, and that Christ went on a mission there during the time when his body was in the sepulchre. I offer the following reasons, which influence my mind against such an understanding of it.

1st. No such doctrine was ever taught by the patriarchs and prophets, who, through the space of nearly four thousand years, were commissioned of God to warn the people of all real dangers with regard to their conduct in life. Since these patriarchs and prophets were commissioned of God to declare to the people of the first four thousand years the dangers to which sin would expose them, and since they did not teach the people that they would be put into a prison for punishment after death, I feel obliged to conclude

that such a prison was *not* one of the dangers to which they were exposed.

It will not be to the point for my brother to argue here, that we may as well conclude that the doctrine of *life and immortality* is not true, because it was not revealed under the Old Testament dispensation; for this doctrine *is* there revealed, though not so clearly as in the New Testament. But what if it had not been revealed under the Old Testament dispensation at all? It is what God has secured to all men by his own purpose and grace, and is not to be either obtained or lost by their works. It is, therefore, a different subject from that which relates to the rewards and punishments of human doings. And further, the patriarchs and prophets were not specially commissioned to be ministers of the doctrine of life and immortality; but they *were* specially commissioned and enjoined to encourage the people in virtue, and dissuade them from sin, by plainly declaring to them the benefits of the former, and the evils of the latter. I cannot accuse them of unfaithfulness; and consequently, as they did not warn the people of a prison for punishment after death, I cannot admit that such a prison was one of the evils to which they were exposed. And, accordingly, I consider it both fair and requisite, as lovers of the Scripture, to take the position that if the language of the text, written in the year of the world 4063, will admit of any other fair construction, we ought not to apply it to the doctrine of such infernal prison.

2d. But Peter does not here introduce the mention of the spirits in prison as the main subject of discourse, nor as a motive of fear to restrain sinners, nor as if he designed to make a communication of anything new.

He was engaged in urging upon his brethren the example of Christ, who suffered for sinners, and being raised again from the dead, pursued their interest, instructing and enlightening those who were in prison. This mention of the spirits, or as Wakefield translates it, the *minds* of men in prison, is introduced incidentally to illustrate the remarks concerning Christ's faithfulness to the interests of mankind, and the benefits of his mission, which extended to sinners. But nothing appears here like a design to introduce any new doctrine in relation to the dangers of sin.

3d. If St. Peter designed to teach that all who died in unbelief before the coming of Christ, had been kept in a state of suffering in an infernal prison, and were visited by Christ's spirit between the time of his death and resurrection, why did he mention those in particular, and those *only*, who were drowned in the deluge? This reference to the antediluvians, and the mention of the *few* of them who were saved upon the water, appears like a design to introduce a *comparison* between that case and some other; but it does *not* appear like a design to teach the doctrine of all unbelieving souls going into an infernal prison after death.

4th. But this text does not say that the work here ascribed to Christ was performed between the time of his death and resurrection. Nor is there any other text of Scripture which asserts that Christ did any work during the time when he was in the state of death. The language of the text, with the preceding context, implies that the work here ascribed to Christ was performed *after his resurrection.* "Being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the spirit; by which also he went and preached to the spirits in

prison." He was put to death in the flesh, then quickened by the spirit,—and then, by the same spirit or power by which God raised him from the dead, he enabled him to preach to the spirits in prison.

Having now given my reasons against adopting either of the opinions on this text, that it signifies Christ's preaching formerly through *Noah*, or his preaching to souls in an *infernal* prison,—I will proceed to present what I consider a rational and Scriptural interpretation of the passage.

And here I will premise, that the word *spirits* in the Scriptures, sometimes means men, or the minds of men, who are alive in the flesh; as "*the spirits of just men made perfect*," (Heb. xii. 23,) unto whom the Hebrew Christians *had come*, certainly means living men. They had come into a unison of mind with just men, made perfect in love. And in the phrase "*Father of spirits*," (Heb. xii. 9,) the sentiment is the same as in the saying, "*We* are also his offspring." God is *our* Father. And "he is the God of the *spirits* of all flesh," i. e. he is the God of *all men*.

But on this word there are several various readings in ancient copies of the New Testament. Dr. Adam Clark says that in some of the Greek MSS. it reads *in spirit*, the word spirit applying to Christ. By which he came *in spirit*, and preached to them who were in prison. And he says that he had before him, in writing his Commentary, one of the first, if not the *very first* edition of the Latin Bible, in which the verse stands thus: "By which he came *spiritually*, and preached to them that were in prison." And in several very ancient MSS. of the Vulgate, which he had in his possession, the clause was similar. Christ came in spirit and preached to them who were in

prison. Or, as Wakefield renders it, "preached to the *minds* of men in prison."

Who, then, were those men in prison, to whom Christ preached in spirit after his resurrection from the dead? On this subject the Scriptures give us very clear and satisfactory light. The Lord said by the prophet Isaiah, "Behold my Servant, whom I uphold; mine Elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him; he shall bring forth judgment to the *Gentiles*. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison-house." Here the prophet speaks of the *Gentiles* as being in darkness and *in prison*, and of Christ being appointed by the spirit of God to give them light.

In another place Christ is represented as saying,— "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the *opening of the prison to them that are bound*."

But this work of liberating the *Gentiles*, who were especially meant by those in darkness and in prison, did not go into effectual operation, until Christ had been put to death in the flesh, and raised again by the spirit of God. During his life in the flesh, he charged his ministering disciples not to go in the way of the Gentiles, but rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But when he had been put to death, and had risen again, he commanded his apostles, saying, "Go ye into *all the world*, and preach the gospel to every

*creature.*" And he promised to be with them alway, even unto the end of the age.

Soon the apostles went among the Gentiles with the gospel ministry, and great multitudes of these spiritual prisoners received the word with gladness. And as the apostles *did all things* in the work of their ministry *through Christ who strengthened them*, hereby *Christ was preaching to men who were in prison.*

But how shall we understand the saying, "By which he went and preached to the spirits (or minds of men) in prison, *which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah?*" Does not this prove that Peter meant that Christ preached to the same individuals who were drowned by the flood? In answer to this I will remark, that *Wakefield*, in his translation of the New Testament, supplies the word *as* here, to express what he thinks the connection shows to be the true meaning. He thinks that the scope of the apostle's discourse, and especially the word *few*, "wherein *few* were saved upon the water," denotes a *comparison*, which must be expressed by supplying the word *as*, thus,—"By which he went and preached to the minds of men in prison, who were disobedient *as* those upon whom the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah;" meaning that he preached to the Gentiles who were alive on the earth in the apostolic age, but were *as* disobedient as the antediluvians.

But I do not perceive the need of this supplement of the word *as* to express the sense here. I would take it as it stands. Christ, after his resurrection, preached to the same *people*, in the sense in which the Scriptures often speak of a people, though not to the same individuals, which were sometimes disobedient in the

days of Nōah. God said to Abraham, "Thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them four hundred years,—and afterwards they shall go out with great substance." Not one of the individuals that went down into Egypt lived to go out again. Yet they were called the *same people* who went out. And long after all the individuals who went out of Egypt were dead, it was said to that people that the Lord delivered them from bondage in Egypt, and made them a great nation. And so on, the events which took place upon that class of the human race, through different ages, are represented as taking place upon the same people.

And there was another grand division of the human race, called *heathen*, or *Gentiles*. And although these particular names were not applied to them in Noah's time, there was the same description of people. And they then constituted a very *large portion* of the world. They were *without God*, i. e. *atheists*, or *idolaters*, in the world. And the same description of people, St. Paul sets forth the *Gentiles* to be in his day. But to this people, men in prison, who through all ages have been atheistical and idolatrous, and who even in Noah's time were disobedient, insomuch that only *few* lives were saved upon the water,—to them Christ, after his resurrection, preached the gospel by his inspired servants, to the enlightening and liberation of *thousands*.

St. Peter, who was the first that went with the gospel among the Gentiles, speaks on the same subject in the 4th chapter of this Epistle. "For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit."

This verse *Wakefield* translates thus;—"For this

indeed, was the effect of the preaching of the gospel to the dead, (the unconverted Gentile,) that some will be punished as carnal men, but others lead a spiritual life unto God."

*Macknight* renders it, "For this purpose hath the gospel been preached to the dead, (i. e. the Gentiles,) that although they might be condemned indeed by men, in the flesh, (their persecutors,) yet they might live eternally by God in the spirit."

*Knatchbull's* translation of it is this,—"For this cause was the gospel preached to them that were dead, that they who live according to men in the flesh, may be condemned; but that they who live according to God in the spirit, may live."

All these agree in understanding the *dead* in this case to mean the *Gentiles*. They were spiritually in prison and in death. St. Paul, addressing Gentile believers, said, "You hath he quickened, who were *dead* in trespasses and sins."

So, then, we have received no message from the deeps of hades. But we hear the fiat of Jehovah. pronouncing the final destruction of hades, by the resurrection of the dead to life. And now, as we are about closing our remarks upon this subject, let it be observed by the reader, that we have not asserted the equality of all men in the resurrection state, in respect to all their faculties and graces. We have endeavored to walk in the simplicity of gospel truth, receiving and reflecting the clear light of revelation. In this light we look through the vista of the ages, and see death swallowed up in the victory of a higher and better life, sin finished, and tears wiped away from off all faces. But what shall be the first emotions of men *on awaking* to the future life,—of men who had closed

their earthly career at different stages of progress,—we say not, for God has not taught us. That they will be freed from the positive evils which flesh is heir to, and placed in circumstances of vastly greater favor as to mental and moral progress, which shall make it a state of reconciliation to God, we have abundantly shown from the testimony. As for the rest, every one is at liberty to philosophize for himself. But this much is settled, that the inspired teachers have given us no authority for dogmatizing with our philosophies, as if they were the essentials of Christian faith and virtue.

Finally, if we are blessed with that Scripture light in which we see the evil of sin, we shall not be envious of the wicked. If we have true conceptions of the excellence of the Christian knowledge and graces, they will constitute the supreme good of our soul's desire. And if we have the spirit of Christian perfectness, love to God and love to man, the progress of others, even from below us, unto the knowledge, and love, and enjoyment of our God, instead of troubling our envy, will increase our own admiration, thankfulness and joy.

# CHAPTER XIII.

## THE FOREKNOWLEDGE AND SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD, AND MORAL ACCOUNTABILITY OF MAN.

"Him, being delivered by the foreknowledge and determinate council of God, ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain." Acts ii. 23.

### SECTION I.

### *The Foreknowledge and Sovereignty of God.*

THE above words of Scripture distinctly set before us the reputed perplexing subject of the foreknowledge and sovereignty of God, in connection with the moral accountability of man.

It is often asked as an unanswerable question, "If God, either by his foreknowledge or predetermination, or both, has made certain any future character or conduct of his creatures, how are they accountable for that conduct?" Many have wrecked their minds almost to distraction in making effort to settle this inquiry; and not a few, finding themselves unable to settle the question to the satisfaction of their own minds, have turned away and denied the premises. They have discarded the doctrine of God's having a determinate counsel, or even a foreknowledge, in relation to the future doings of his moral accountable creatures.

That learned and popular commentator, Dr. A. Clarke, has furnished us the following labor of confused thought on this important subject. "God is *omniscient*, and *can know all* things; but does it follow from this that he *must* know all things? Is he not as

free in the volition of his *wisdom*, as he is in the volition of his *power?* God has ordained some things as *absolutely certain;* these he knows as *absolutely certain.* He has ordained other things as *contingent;* these he knows as *contingent.* It would be absurd to say, that he foreknows a thing as only contingent, which he has made *absolutely* certain. And it would be as absurd to say, that he foreknows a thing to be absolutely certain, which in his own eternal counsel he has made contingent. By absolutely certain, I mean a thing which must be in that order, time, place, and form, in which Divine Wisdom has ordained it to be; and that it can be no otherwise than this infinite counsel has ordained. By contingent, I mean such things as the infinite wisdom of God has thought proper to poise on the possibility of being or not being, leaving it to the will of intelligent beings to turn the scale. To deny this would involve the most palpable contradictions, and the most monstrous absurdities. * * Sin is no more sin, a vicious human action is no crime, if God have decreed it, and by his foreknowledge and will impelled the creature to act it. On this ground there can be no punishment for delinquencies; for if everything be done as God has predetermined, and his determinations must necessarily be all right, then neither the instrument nor the agent has done wrong. Thus all vice and virtue, praise and blame, merit and demerit, guilt and innocence, are at once confounded, and all distinctions of this kind confounded with them."

"Now allowing the doctrine of the contingency of human actions, (and it must be allowed in order to shun the above absurdities and blasphemies,) then we see every intelligent creature accountable for all its

works, and for the use it makes of the powers with which God has endued it. And to grant all this consistently, we must also grant, that God foresees nothing as absolutely and inevitably certain, which he has made contingent; and because he has designed it to be contingent, therefore he cannot know it as absolutely and inevitably certain. I conclude that God, though omniscient, is not obliged, in consequence of this, to know all that he can know; no more than he is obliged, because he is omnipotent, to do all that he can do."

Such is the reasoning of Dr. Clarke. It will be acknowledged that he presents, in its strongest light, the popular objection to the doctrine of the foreknowledge and decrees of God. And he denounces the doctrine as involving the most monstrous absurdities and blasphemies. But let us see how well or how illy he succeeds, in clearing *himself* from *absurdities* and *blasphemies*. The Doctor perceived that to say a thing is foreknown of God, makes it to be as certain to take place, as to say he decreed it; indeed, that his foreknowing it involves the fact of his having decreed it. And this is evident; for though a *man* may be made to foreknow an event which he does not purpose, it is because there is a power above him which purposed it, and reveals to him the knowledge of it. And to suppose that God foreknows the events that are to come, and yet has not purposed them, would be to suppose there is a fate, or some power before God, which laid out the chain of events that should come, making certain their causes, and then God rose up, and by his prescience looked forward, and saw the chain of causes and effects which he had no agency in establishing, but which a prior power had fixed before

him. And this would not relieve the difficulty at all in relation to human accountability: for if events belonging to the doings of men were foreknown of God to be certainly so, and could not be otherwise, whether that certainty were founded in the operation of causes in the nature of things as fixed by eternal fate, or whether it were founded in the purpose of God, the question labors in the same perplexity, "How is man worthy of either praise or blame for what he does?"

But to escape this difficulty, Dr. Clarke, (I name him because he is the most prominent mouth-piece of this sentiment,) denies God's *foreknowledge* of the moral actions of mankind, and so involves himself in the strange absurdity, that the omniscient God is ignorant of all future events in relation to the moral character and condition of the human race! Yes, when he devised the plan of creating a race of intelligent beings, and when he called this race into existence, he had no knowledge of what any of them would ever do, or of what might be their moral state and condition. He chose to be thus ignorant, to leave the moral actions and circumstances of all his creatures contingent even to himself, having no knowledge of what they would be until they should transpire. So then, as the history of the world is a history of doings, and circumstances, and events, belonging, directly and indirectly, to the moral actions of mankind, we are here required to view the history of all nations, from the creation of the world unto the present time, as a history of undirected contingencies. And the professed Christian, with this view, can no more hope in the Divine government for any future moral good, than the veriest skeptic, who believes in no God. For this sentiment represents, nay, it *asserts*, that God does not

*purpose*—that he does not even *know* any moral transaction or condition of mankind, before it comes to pass. This sentiment will afford us no hope for the continued happiness of any saint of God, even in the immortal state. For it represents that what God foreknows as absolutely certain, it is no virtue or holiness in the creature to do, even if it be in itself good. Therefore God does not foreknow that there will be any holiness in heaven, for if he foreknew it as absolutely certain, it would not be holiness. And if God does not know that men will be holy in heaven, then he has not *revealed* any such knowledge, and we of course have no information on which to hope for future holiness and peace.

Such is the strange and hopeless condition in which we of necessity become involved, by assuming the sentiment which denies the purpose and foreknowledge of God concerning the moral state of mankind. For the reason which they who espouse this sentiment offer for so doing is, that if a train of causes and effects is fixed of God, so that he foreknows all their operations and results, including even the moral actions of men, then there is no virtue or vice, no praise or blame-worthiness, in human works. The argument affects what are called *virtuous* as well as *vicious* actions, assuming that one class of actions no more have merit or virtue in them, than the other class have blame, unless God himself is ignorant of them, not knowing what they will certainly be, until after they take place. Therefore, as they are not willing to give up all idea of righteousness and sin in the human character, they choose to deny the foreknowledge and determinate counsel of God in relation to those moral concerns. Of course they must deny God's positive foreknowledge that any portion of his creatures will

be righteous in the future world; for if he have purposed so as to foreknow what will be their moral character there, then there can be no righteousness, as well as no sin there. Men must be there without moral characters, must cease to be moral beings. And will that be heaven, where men have no moral character? Which horn of the dilemma will you take? Will you allow that God certainly foreknows the characters of men in heaven, and therefore they will have no character there? or will you maintain that men will have a moral character in heaven, you know not what, and that God is ignorant of what it will be?

The learned commentator referred to, denounces as absurd and blasphemous the sentiment which *he* is pleased to say denies the accountability of man. Is it any less absurd and blasphemous to deny the omniscience of God, and disallow him any share in the government of the moral world; to represent the grand concerns of the moral creation as under the sole direction of atheistical *chance*, and sink the doctrine of a Divine revelation and enlightened hope of future moral good?

But why should we deny either? How happy would it have been for the universe, if there had been wisdom in the Creator to devise a system of creation, so that he could have allowed himself to be omniscient, to know and superintend the affairs of his moral creatures, and yet they be accountable beings, having individual moral characters. And such, yes, so honorable to God and grateful to man, I think we shall yet find the fact to appear.

But some may accuse me of doing injustice to Dr. Clarke, in saying that he denies God's omniscience.

He says that God is *omniscient*. True, but he defines omniscience to be merely the *power* to know all things, and not the *possession* of infinite knowledge. Thus while he ascribes to God the term omniscient, he at the same time denies the *fact* of his omniscience, by a false definition of the word. For, although *all-powerful* signifies an *ability* to do all things, yet *all-knowing* does not signify merely an ability to know all things. For if *ability* to know all things constituted omniscience, though that ability might not be employed to gain knowledge, or actually to know, then we might be presented with an omniscient being actually knowing nothing, choosing to withhold the exercise of his power to know, and remaining in utter ignorance. Yes, and upon this definition of knowledge, its being the *power* or *capacity* to know, then the *ignoramus*, who knows not his letters, may be called a wise and learned man, because he had *ability* to learn, if he had chosen to exert that ability for the acquisition of knowledge. But it is not so. *Omniscience* is *all-knowing*, the possession of all knowledge. And whoever ascribes to God an ignorance of anything past, present, or to come, denies his *omniscience*.

But Dr. Clarke does not find himself able to carry out, uncontradicted, this sentiment of God's voluntary ignorance of the moral actions of men. In immediate connexion with this unaccountable effort of his to limit the actual knowledge of God, he gives the following full and necessary definition of the Divine omniscience, which we quoted in a former chapter:—"God cannot have foreknowledge, strictly speaking, because this would suppose there was something *coming*, in what we call *futurity*, which had not yet arrived at the presence of the Deity. Neither can he have any

afterknowledge, strictly speaking, for this would suppose something that had taken place, in what we call pretereity, or past time, had now got *beyond* the presence of the Deity. As God exists in all that can be called *eternity*, so he is equally everywhere: nothing can be future to him, because he lives in all futurity: nothing can be past to him, because he equally exists in all past time; futurity and pretereity are relative terms to us; but they can have no relation to that God who dwells in every point of eternity, with whom all that is past, all that is present, and all that is future to man, exists in one infinite, indivisible, and eternal *now*."

Who would imagine that the man who could give such a definition of the omniscience of God, holds at the same time that there was a most important class of events, viz., moral events, which had not in the beginning, and have not yet, arrived at the presence of the Deity? If God dwells in every point of eternity, so that all that is past, all that is present, and all that is future to man, exists with God in one infinite, indivisible, and eternal *now*, then surely every event, moral as well as physical, future as well as past and present, is known to God. And being known to God, it belongs to a course of operation by a train of causes and effects which he has established, and is certain to take place. Yes, such an event as the wicked crucifixion of Jesus Christ, was according to the *determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.* To this conclusion we are brought by our belief in the proper omniscience and supremacy of God, and precisely this is asserted by the sacred penman in the words at the head of this chapter.

But there is a way which some have, otherwise to

dispose of our text. We will refer again to the learned commentator before quoted. And here let me remark, I do not quote his words by way of controversy with Dr. Clarke, nor as a *reviewer* of his works. I am on a a subject, which, to many minds, seems perplexing. Certain objections, and attempts at explanation, are common among us. And rather than expose myself to the charge, or even the suspicion, of not stating the objections and opposing explanations fairly, by giving them in my own language, I choose to present them in the language of one of their own strongest and boldest authors. This is the only purpose for which I quote Dr. Clarke. This commentator says on the words which I have placed at the head of this chapter, that this determinate counsel "is that counsel of God which defined the time, place, and circumstance, according to his foreknowledge, which always saw what was the proper time and place for the manifestation and crucifixion of his Son: so that there was nothing *casual* in these things; God having determined that the salvation of a lost world should be brought about in this way, and neither the Jews nor the Romans had any power here, but what was given them from above. It was necessary to show the Jews, that it was not through Christ's weakness or inability to defend himself, that he was taken; nor was it through their *malice*, merely, that he was slain; for God had determined long before, from the foundation of the world, Rev. xiii. 8, to give his Son a sacrifice for sin; and the treachery of Judas, and the malice of the Jews, were only the incidental means by which the counsel of God was fulfilled: the counsel of God intending the sacrifice; but never ordering

that it should be brought about by such wretched means. This was *permitted*, the other was *decreed*."

Here then, we have the wisdom of this world, exposing its foolishness more and more conspicuously. God's determinate counsel defined the time, place, and circumstance of the crucifixion of his Son; he determined that his Son should, at that time and place, be crucified, but did not determine that anybody should do it! Yes, according to his determinate counsel, he delivered his Son into the hands of men, for the purpose that he might be crucified at the determined time and place, but he did not determine, nor even know as an absolute certainty, that they would crucify him! That act of men was left undetermined, contingent and uncertain, even to God himself, until it took place! Does anybody believe this? *Can* anybody believe it? That God determined that a certain thing should be done, and done at a particular time and place, and done by *men* too, and yet did not design that men should do it? Is this good sense? If it is, I must confess that my own mind is strangely constituted. And then, to persons who handle the sacred record in this manner, how wonderful must it appear that when their God has determined that a particular thing shall be done, at a fixed time and place, without determining that anybody should do it, men should by chance take it into their heads to do that particular thing, at the same time and place, and thus without God's designing it, be the incidental means by which God's design is fulfilled! It seems, then, if it were not for the lucky coincidence of these undirected chances with the plans of God, his designs would not be fulfilled. We shall therefore owe as much praise at least to the atheist's chance, as to the Arminian

God, for any purposes which may finally succeed, affecting the concerns of the moral universe.

But away with these blasphemous and mind-degrading sentiments. We multiply, rather than *escape* our difficulties, by denying the foreknowledge and purpose of God concerning the moral state of his moral creation, with a view to support the accountability of man. Everything in doctrine is great loss, which we must purchase by the sacrifice of the perfections of God. Indeed, all labor to support such a view of human accountability as must exclude the foreknowledge and purpose of God, is but mere talk, mere verbiage, against the sober conviction of the understanding of those who employ it. For after all is said, the sober conviction of every mind which reflects on the subject is, that He who made all things, in whom we live and move, knows all the events which take place in his moral, as well as in his physical creation; and that they were just as well known to him from the beginning, as they are now, or ever will be; and that, of course, all these events, of both classes, belong to a chain of causes and effects, which is established by the Author of creation, who is God alone, who sees the end from the beginning, whose counsel shall stand, and he will do all his pleasure. It will not avail us, in respect to the application of this sublime doctrine, to make a distinction between great and small events, and moral and physical. For such are the mutual and alternate bearings and connections of these things, that

> "From the great chain whatever link you strike,
> Tenth or ten thousandth, breaks the chain alike."

*All* will admit the existence of this great American

nation to have been embraced in the counsel of God. For this, every Christian gives thanks to God, and not to *luck and chance*. But in tracing back the chain of events which resulted in the settlement of this country by our forefathers, we touch upon thousands of incidents, among which the most important are doings of men, involving both praiseworthiness and blame. It required a powerful motive to determine those fathers and mothers to tear themselves from their loved homes, and friends, and all the dear and familiar scenes of earth, and embark upon the trackless deep, for a waste howling wilderness upon these distant shores. What was the reason? It was their supreme love of their religion. And why should this have moved them to such a pilgrimage? Because they could not enjoy their religion, and discharge its duties at home. What hindered them? It was the wicked and oppressive measures of their government. If that government had been otherwise disposed, our pilgrim fathers would not have come to these shores, and this nation would not have been here.

Permit me to indulge a little personal reflection. I love to regard myself as a child, not of chance, but of God. I trace my lineage directly back to members of that pilgrim band, who came by the second voyage of the May-Flower to the Plymouth shore. Were it not for the tyranny of the English crown, as we have seen, they would not have come here. And were it not for a piece of bribery, which purchased the treachery of the May-Flower's captain, they would have been landed upon the Hudson, and not upon Plymouth rock. These important incidents in the train being different, thousands of connected and succeeding events would have been different,—and *I* should not have

been here, nor upon the stage of being. When I thus meditate, in my devout and reverential confidence in God as his child, who hath numbered the very hairs of my head, I dare not, I *cannot* admit the thought, that even the conduct of the pilot which disappointed the plan of our pilgrim fathers, was a chance, contingency, or accident, in relation to the government of God.

Let any of my readers take a retrospective view of his past life, and he will probably recall some event which seemed insignificant at the time, which gave such a turn to affairs, as essentially to affect, or totally change, the whole subsequent course and condition of his life. If the more important events of his life were contemplated in the arrangements of the Deity, so was that lesser which conduced to them. It belongs to a chain of causes and effects, established by the wise and benevolent Governor of all.

Such being the truth, supported by Scripture and reason, let us hold it fast. It is the only principle on which we can rest the safety of the universe, or enjoy any confidence in the government of God. Will you say we must deny this, however true it may appear, in order to make men accountable beings?—that to admit this, is to do away all accountability, all virtue and sin in the children of men? Be not so easily frightened. There is no merit, nor wisdom, nor prudence, in such rashness. Rather say, that if this sentiment is true, then human accountability is something different from what you have imagined. When you have found an important truth, do not be frightened from it by imagined difficulties. Stand in the light and the power of that truth, and encounter the *supposed* difficulties as faithful Christians. Let the

difficulties come, and examine them, and they will be found not to be.

"But the difficulty now before us," says one, "I cannot overcome. If man acts as he is induced, by the influence of means or causes in the order of things established by the foreknowledge and determinate counsel of God, how is he accountable,—how is he to be praised or blamed,—how is he deserving of reward or punishment, for what he does?"

To answer this inquiry, to reconcile the doctrines of the Divine foreknowledge and purpose, and the moral accountability of man, in a manner most conducive to Christian faith and virtue, will be the labor of the succeeding section.

## SECTION II.

### *Harmony of the Divine Sovereignty, and Human Accountability.*

It is a question which has confused and perplexed many minds, "If God, by his foreknowledge and determinate counsel, has made certain any future moral actions of men, how are they accountable for those actions?" The foregoing section offers various important considerations preliminary to an understanding of this inquiry, and which urge the mind to a most earnest effort to obtain such understanding.

Some have decided that, on the premises here stated, men are not accountable for their conduct, have neither moral merit nor demerit. And so, to support human accountability, they deny the premises, the foreknowledge and purpose of God in relation to the moral state of his creatures. Thus they have deprived the *moral* creation of a Divine government, even of a God; and have deprived them-

selves of any ground of hope for future moral good. For if God have no purpose in relation to the moral condition of men, because the existence and operation of such a purpose would incapacitate men for an individual moral character,—then we have no Divine purpose to trust in for future moral good, and the whole Christian system of faith and hope is null and void.

But no man would ever think of denying the foreknowledge of God, embracing all events, and a foreknowledge the certainty of which is based on the original and comprehensive *purpose* of the all-wise Creator and Ruler of the universe, were he not driven into the denial by affright, lest it should infringe on the free agency and the moral accountability of man. And to answer the inquiry which has raised this bewildering affright, to reconcile the doctrines of the Divine foreknowledge and decrees, and the moral accountability of man, in a manner most conducive to Christian faith and virtue, is the assigned labor of this section of my work. This I shall now attempt to do,—

1st. Scripturally.

2d. Philosophically.

1st. I will show from the Scriptures that the doctrine of a Divine *purpose* concerning moral as well as physical events, and the moral accountability of man for his actions, are both *true*, and of course consistent with each other.

A case in point is placed at the head of this chapter. It is furnished us by Peter, Acts ii. 22: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and with wicked hands have crucified and slain." The same sentiment is in

Acts iv. 27, 28: "For of a truth, against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together; for to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done." The sentiment of these Scriptures is, that the persecution and crucifixion of Christ by the hands of men, was before purposed of God, and also that they were guilty for doing it; they did it with "wicked hands," or herein acted a sinful part.

And when Jesus was yet with his disciples on the earth, he foretold to them what persecutions they were to suffer at the hands of their religious opposers. He described these transactions with all the exactness with which an eye witness could describe them in history after they had taken place. Of course he had committed to him from God, of that *prescience*, by which he saw those transactions beforehand, and saw them to be certain by the operation of causes in the fixed order of things under the Divine government. They could not be otherwise, because they were certain to be so, as Jesus saw and foretold they would be. Yet those persecutors were condemned for those deeds of malice, and were judged and punished for them.

Look at the case of Pharaoh. God said to Moses, when he sent him to Pharaoh with a certain message, that he would harden Pharaoh's heart, that he should not grant his request. That is, though it was necessary, as one means of bringing about the designed end, that Moses should go to Pharaoh with the message which the Lord directed him to carry, yet he knew that the influences in the order of his providence, would dispose Pharaoh to refuse compliance

with Moses' request. Yet Pharaoh was condemned for his conduct, and was punished for it.

And so we may go through with the whole course of the prophetic Scriptures, and we shall find a numberless variety of events predicted, relating to the moral character and conduct of man in then future time,—conduct both good and evil. If God had, according to Dr. Clarke's plan, withheld his knowledge of these events, and poised them on the possibility of being, or not being, so that even in the mind of God, they were as likely not to be, as to be, how could he have revealed to his prophets the certain foreknowledge of them? God foreknew all these events as certain to be, and inspired his prophets to foretell them as certain to be, and all which related to times which have come, have certainly taken place as they were foretold. Yet the actors in these foreordained, and consequently foreknown and foretold events, were judged as subjects of praise or blame, of reward or punishment, according to the parts which they severally acted in them.

The prophets, for instance, predicted, among other things, that at a then future time, many people should come and say, "Let us go up to the house of the Lord, to the mountain of the mighty God of Jacob; for he will teach us his ways, and we will walk in his paths." It was then certain that this prophecy would be fulfilled, though it spoke directly and solely of the moral actions of men. It was as impossible for it to be otherwise, as it is that God should lie. God, in the purpose of his government, had provided those means of moral influence, which should dispose and bring the people thus to return and walk in the paths or the laws of the Lord. Yet this walking in the

laws of God, when it takes place, is reckoned a righteousness and a merit of reward to them who do so.

The inspired prophets spoke beforehand of the coming and the character of the Messiah. They described with great particularity the character which he sustained, and the works which he would perform. And he came, and he acted, precisely as they foretold. I think there is hardly a Christian of any sect, of so great intellectual and moral perversity as not to admit that God purposed, from the beginning, what character his Son should sustain on the earth, and what works he should perform. He determined, as the prophet expresses it, to hold his Messiah's hand and keep him, to put his spirit upon him, and give him wisdom and understanding, and to keep him surrounded by the influence of such circumstances and such principles, as that he should certainly sustain the character and perform the works which were purposed. Yet was there no merit, no virtue, no holiness in the character and works of Christ? Because his moral character and works were made certain by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God,—will you therefore deny that there was any merit or virtue in his works? Then you must perceive that it is not me, but the *Bible*, that you are contending against. For every word of the Bible concerning the Messiah's character, shows that he acted throughout according to the previously fixed purpose of God, and also that he was a subject of approbation and reward, as an accountable being, for what he did.*

* For further Scriptural and practical illustrations of this subject, the harmony of the Divine purpose with the legitimate action of the moral agency of man, see Chap. IX., sec. iii., pp. 259—262.

It seems unnecessary to pursue this division of our subject longer, for it is established beyond controversy, by authority of Scripture, that God's foreknowledge and foreordination of the moral character and works of his moral creatures, is compatible with their accountability to his moral law, and their merit or demerit, approvableness or blame, accordingly as their actions agree or disagree with the precepts of that law. Still some minds remain unsatisfied. They are satisfied that I have established my position by the authority of the Scriptures, but they are not satisfied of the *reasonableness* even of the Scripture sentiments on this subject. Their minds still labor under the inquiry, "How can it be, even as the Scriptures teach, that those moral actions of men which are foreknown of God, and embraced as links in the great chain of events which he has purposed, are in justice approvable or condemnable, rewardable or punishable, by the judgment of God? How can men be accountable for such actions?"—I will then pass on,

2dly—To consider the same subject *philosophically*. And here I need do but little more than free the mind from certain false ideas attached to the principal words which the question employs, and settle upon correct views of the sense which these terms bear. What do you mean by *sin?* Is it a frustration of the Divine purposes, and disappointment of the Divine expectations? If you put this definition upon sin, no wonder you cannot conceive how there can be any sin, if all events are embraced in the original purpose of God. You can have no such sin until you have dethroned God, and thwarted the purpose of his government.

And what do you mean by blame? Is it an extraneous thing, an external expression from the mouth of God, of disapprobation and disappointed feeling toward the sinner? And what do you mean by man's moral accountability? Do you mean that when he has done acting in the body, he shall be called before God in another state of being, and required to give account, relate a history, of what he has done, and the reason of his conduct? And what do you mean by man's desert of reward or punishment? Is it that when he has accounted of himself as above, if the account is in truth favorable, he shall be paid off for the gratification he has afforded the Deity, with the extraneous reward of an endless residence in heaven? And that if the account proves unfavorable, God will, for this offence, disappointment, and indignity suffered, wreak eternal vengeance on the offending sinner's soul? I apprehend that the objector's mind is confused with some such notions of sin, blame, and accountability. And with such a view of the sense of these words, no wonder that he should ask in perplexity of mind, "How is man accountable, how to blame, how punishable for what he does, if his actions are induced by the influence of circumstances which God arranged for this purpose in his own established order of things?"

But we will try not to be deceived by the sound of words. We will endeavor to take hold of the knowledge of facts. What is sin? "Sin is the transgression of the law." Of what law? Is it the transgression of the law or rule of the Divine purpose, by which God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will? No; it is the law or rule of human happiness, or moral right, established in the nature of things,

and revealed in the published law, or word of God. Then when we violate this law, we sin. This is no farce; it is a reality. This law of happiness does exist. Though God has published it in his word, it is *founded* in our *very nature.* And when we violate it, the wrong, the sin, does really exist,—because sin *is* the violation of this rule, or law. If God has placed us in the midst of circumstances, which for a wise purpose he designed should have an influence upon us to induce us at times to violate this moral rule or law, it does not alter the fact, and make it that there is no sin: for this is the sin, it is the violation of this law.

And with regard to *accountability;* it is that principle which God has established in the constitution of his moral creation, by which we are caused to feel approbation or disapprobation, happiness or unhappiness, accordingly as we obey or violate the principles of this moral law. And this accountability is real. This principle really exists, and will mete happiness or unhappiness to man, according to his actions, though he acts as he is acted upon by the stronger influence of circumstances affecting him.

Permit me to illustrate this principle by the help of a certain principle in physical nature. There is a natural law, by which, if you do violence to the principles of your physical nature, you must suffer pain as the consequence. If the wound you receive was ordered by the providence of God, it removes not this fact. While groaning under the pain of a burning fever, or a broken limb, if any should remark to you that this evil is ordered by a wise and kind Providence,—you would not say, "If providence *ordered* this event, then I have no disease, no broken

limb, no pain." The evil is there; it is just as much there if it came by order of Divine Providence, as if it came by chance. The law of our physical nature will continue to inflict the pain, as long as the disease counteracts its principles. And moral accountability is that principle in our moral nature, which answers to the principle just described in our physical nature. It is really there, and will inflict pain on our violation of the law of our moral constitution, just as certainly as the other principle will cause pain upon any violation of the law of physical nature. And this pain which proceeds from a violation of the moral law, is called *punishment*. Hence, man is accountable and punishable for a violation of the moral law, and that in perfect consistency with the doctrine of the Divine purpose embracing the moral as well as physical circumstances of mankind. So, if the question of accountability be reiterated in another form, asking, why should men be *punished* for doing what they are induced to do by circumstances foreknown of God, the answer is, the punishment is not an arbitrary infliction of revengeful torture, but it is the necessary evil which belongs to the violation of the moral law. Such is the moral nature of man, that the exercise and practice of hatred, jealousy, injustice, or any evil principle, must as necessarily produce the moral woe called punishment, as physical disease causes bodily pain.

And the institution and administration of this retributive principle of accountability is *just* and *right*, because it is good, it is *corrective*. If the child could put his fingers into the fire without pain, he might burn them off before he should become old enough to make them useful. The pain which accompanies

certain destructive circumstances of the body, induces us to guard against those circumstances. And so the pains or punishments of sin exert an influence to guard us against sin. And they do, to a great extent, prove efficacious. That constitution of our moral nature by which we shrink from the touch of evil principles, as we shrink from the touch of fire to our flesh, operates to a great extent to preserve mankind from moral disease. And even those punishments which God has sometimes inflicted by a special interposition of external providence, are also just and right because infinite wisdom sees them necessary as a means for the proper exercise of his moral government over the world.

I think that our general subject is cleared from difficulty. Only cease from using words without definite ideas, and come down to a view of facts, rather than dally upon the sound of words, and all appears clear. God is viewed and adored in all his infinite perfections, as the all-wise and omniscient Governor of the natural and moral world,—and man also, by a wise and benevolent economy of God, *accountable*, i. e. *rewardable* and *punishable* for his conduct. And these truths must have existed for the glory of God and the good of man. If God had not devised a plan, and did not exercise a government to carry that plan into effect, in relation to the *moral* as well as the natural circumstances of his creation, he would have been unworthy of human confidence and praise. And if he had not subjected men to this principle of moral accountability, they would not have been capacitated for coming up into that peculiar species of individual enjoyment as moral beings, for which they are designed. The more we examine this subject, the more we see and admire the

consummate wisdom and goodness of God, in the constitution and government of the moral, as well as of the natural world.

With a few brief remarks on the *practical influence* of a *belief* in the doctrines of this chapter, I will conclude. Some have thought that this belief is unfriendly to the cause of virtue. But so widely do I differ, as to think that no sentiment is *so friendly* to virtue's cause. The sentiment which I have advocated is not that of some predestinarians, who hold to the arbitrary decrees of God, executed by a constant miraculous exertion of Divine power impelling men to action, and to arbitrary and revengeful punishments. The decrees of God are founded in the constitution of things; in the connections and dependencies of circumstances and events. The actions of men are induced by circumstances, so that with the creature they are *voluntary*; or *free*, if you will take the word free to apply to the voluntary action of the mind, not compelled by outward force. This is the only sense in which man's agency is free. It is not free in a sense to be able to will one thing as well as another, under circumstances the same. God himself is not free in this sense. His holy nature admits of no freedom to do wrong as well as right. "It is impossible for God to lie." He is free to do his pleasure; he is free to choose what he will. But it would be irreverence to say that he can *will* to do evil, or the lesser good. And with regard to *our* moral freedom, it consists only in the fact that the mind acts by the influence of motives operating within itself, so that its own consent is obtained. Indeed, we are as morally free as we could be, surrounded by the circumstances in the midst of which we are placed, even if there were no intelli-

gent power above us. The difference between us and some others, is chiefly in this; that the direction of the circumstances affecting the influences that bear upon us, is of the government of God, and not of atheistical Chance or heathen Fate. But God does not, by any direct interposition, interfere with the volitions of our minds. They are our own, in the sense in which our existence is our own. But that our choice is influenced by motives, and those motives by circumstances, no man will deny, unless he shuts his eyes upon himself. And why should one wish to shut his eyes upon the knowledge of himself, and of man? How important is a knowledge of the facts which we have brought to view in relation to man, in its practical bearing. We must understand the nature of human agency, and the principle of government over mind by moral *influences*, in order to apply a successful system of moral education. And with the true knowledge of man in this respect, we shall both be able to conduct the better system of moral discipline, and at the same time to see that God may accomplish all his purposes with regard to the moral state of his creatures, and even bring them all to worship and adore him, by the operation of causes which shall induce their own voluntary action.

One circumstance which repels the consent of the mind to acts of wrong, and inclines it to the choice of virtue, is the discovery of the principle of accountability, which has just been explained, connecting happness with virtue, and misery with vice. And moral and religious instruction is a means of placing this circumstance in its healthful influence, before the mind.

By the constitution of nature which God has given *us, we as* strongly desire happiness, and dislike misery,

with our belief in the foreknowledge and government of God, as if we believed that the affairs of the moral creation were left to the blind sport of *chance*. We admire the wisdom of God in the constitution of our moral as well as of our physical nature. Our innate desire of happiness, with the objects around us affecting that desire, excites us to action; the knowledge of the connexion between sinful actions and misery, repels our choice of sin: and our acquaintance with the fact that virtue's fruit is happiness, induces our choice of virtue's road. And this view of the principle of accountability as being founded in the moral constitution of our nature, and being certain in its awards, must have a better and steadier moral influence, than the opposite view of its being extraneous and uncertain.

Thus nothing is lost, but rather something is gained, by the doctrine of this chapter, as it respects the moral influence of the doctrine of rewards and punishments. And then *everything* is hereby *gained* on the score of confidence in God, and pious hope, and gratitude and praise. It is only in the light of this sentiment, that, when, with Paul, we have viewed the human creation made subject to vanity, and have seen the reign of moral as well as natural evil, even of unbelief and sin,—we can look through the cloud of darkness, rise above the jarring elements of moral contrarieties, and rest on the perfect government of God for the consummation of a purpose, to eventuate in the highest universal good;—yes, and with that holy apostle exclaim in pious rapture, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God.. How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out. * * For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

# CHAPTER XIV.

## FAITH, REPENTANCE, AND THE NEW BIRTH.

### SECTION I.

### *Faith.*

THE Christian faith is a belief and trustful confidence in Christian truth. It is a plain and interesting subject; yet human theology has defrauded the mind of its blessed simplicity, by throwing around it the garb of mystery. And not a few there are, whom education has so accustomed to associate religion and mystery, that an intelligible, common-sense doctrine is hardly viewed as possessing the dignity which belongs to religion.

Our present subject is defined by Dr. Brown, in his Dictionary of the Bible, in the following manner:— "*Saving faith* is that gracious quality, principle or habit wrought in the heart by the Spirit taking the things of Jesus and showing them to us, whereby we receive and rest alone on Christ for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel. By this faith we are united to his person, as our spiritual head and husband, and he dwelleth in our heart; are interested in his righteousness and fulness; and by improvement thereof, become bold before God, and active in his service. This is the *faith of God's elect*, as none but they are made sharers of it, and they alone are in the faith; that is, possessed of, and act according to the principles of it. Faith, as a habit or principle, is implanted in every regenerated infant, even though the word of God can neither be the means of their

regeneration, nor can they act faith on it, as it is unknown to them."

Now who can understand the nature of the Christian faith, from this definition of it? What is it? and how will you go at work to obtain it? Why, the author above quoted says, "it is that gracious quality, principle, or habit, wrought in the heart by the Spirit taking the things of Christ and showing them to us." The elect only can have it; and even elect *infants* may possess it, though they have no understanding. And if elect infants may have it without understanding, of course elect men and women may possess the Christian faith likewise, while as ignorant of the truths of the gospel as those regenerated infants!

The proper Christian faith, then, as thus defined, does not, as St. Paul describes it, *come by hearing the word of God*, nor by reading or understanding it. It is an imagined inexplicable something, supposed to be miraculously wrought in the person's constitution, before he can understand or receive God's word. Of course, it no more comes through the medium of the understanding, than does the curdling chill of the blood in the cold winter's blast.

It is the prevalence of this view of religious faith, that exposes so many minds to slavish entanglement in dark and absurd theological schemes. When they have imbibed the opinion that faith is a mysterious "quality," wrought by the Spirit of God, but not through the means of instruction and enlightenment of the mind, they are then in a situation to be imposed upon by the sleight of men. Any frame or emotion of feeling, which even the impostor's operations excite, may be dignified into the gracious "quality" of the Christian faith.

But as I said in the outset, our subject is not in itself mysterious. Christian faith is the reception, with a loving, trusting heart, of Christian truth. St. Paul says it "is the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen."[a] It is to be obtained, then, through the medium of evidence. Hence the same apostle says, in another place,—"So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."[b] The word *hearing*, in this case, includes reading, or any means of instruction by which to come at the word of God. When we *read* the Scriptures, the word of God speaketh unto us through the inspired record; and if we ponder and understand, we *hear* the word of God.

If, then, we are to obtain faith by the means of hearing, what shall we believe? Everything we hear? Is the mere fact of our hearing a thing said, the only condition of our belief in it? If so, we must believe a most mammoth collection of contradictions and absurdities. Our faith must be a vast reservoir of all the good and evil, truth and falsehood, which we read or hear. No: this hearing by which the true faith cometh, *is by the word of God.* And even what we hear *alleged* as the word of God, we must not receive implicitly; for there are diverse sentiments whose abettors assure us that they are the sentiments of God's word. "Beloved," saith an apostle, "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world." You must try what you hear, by the accredited record of Divine truth. So did the noble Bereans, who heard the preaching of Paul. "They received the word with all readiness of mind, (that is,

[a] Heb. xii. 1. [b] Rom. x. 17.

they received it for examination,) and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so: therefore many of them believed."

Hence it is seen that there is nothing more forbidding to the reasoning mind in the subject of faith, than in any valuable matter of human inquiry. It invites the attention of all, young and old, grave and gay, as a subject you may investigate, understand, feel, enjoy. It is the belief of the word of God, which by the gospel is preached unto you, and which addresses itself to your reason and conscience. And while the faith of the gospel is the belief of its teachings, it involves a confiding trust in the government of God, that in life or death, for time and eternity, the full heart can exclaim, "JEHOVAH-JIREH."[c]

## SECTION II.

### *Repentance.*

Repentance, as it is taught in the Scriptures, is a change or alteration of mind and character for the better. The original word (*metanoeō*, to repent) is defined by Parkhurst as meaning, "to understand afterwards, to be wise after a fact committed, to change one's mind and opinion so as to influence for the better his subsequent conduct." It involves, of course, the idea of reformation. It means something more than sorrow on account of certain wrong committed; for one may regret having done certain evil things, not that he has really changed his mind as to the pursuit of the same course, but because he is detected and suffers punishment for his wrong. Sorrow and repentance are not synonymous, though "*godly* sorrow

[c] Gen. xxii. 14. "And Abraham called the name of that place, Jehovah-Jireh," i. e., *God will provide.*

*worketh* repentance to salvation not to be repented of."[d] That is, godly sorrow for sin worketh a change, a reformation of mind and conduct.

It is hence perceived that gospel repentance includes a change of mind and affections with regard to sin itself. Consequently, when we hear professing Christians remark, that if they could throw off certain foreign and extraneous fear, such, for instance, as the fear of the fabled Tartarus of Pluto, they would care not for the service of God, but would take their fill of sin, we know they have not passed through the work of Christian repentance. Their hearts are in love with sin; they are "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Their professed repentance is a mere piece of wary policy. It is like the case of the supposed dying man, who ordered his son to convey back to his neighbor's barn an item of stolen property, but on finding himself convalescent countermanded the order, and had the property retaken to his own use. There was the passion of fear, but no inward hatred of sin.

There is a good illustration of the subject of repentance in the parable of the prodigal son. It is true the sufferings of the poor wanderer were a means of bringing him to himself, to his sober reflections. And this is a fac-simile of all punishment in the government of God, as to its purposed use. It is to check, restrain, and bring the transgressor to himself. But the prodigal was not governed by the consideration of any extraneous harm, any future revenge, from an enraged father. He was *in* a lost condition; sin itself was his most dreadful enemy; and he had no prospect, in transgression's path, but darkness and woe. He

[d] 2 Cor. vii. 10.

turned his back upon his sins, and returned to his father's house. And the congratulation which he met upon his return was, not that he had thus averted the father's wrath, which would have inflicted a dreadful death upon him, but that he had escaped from the death in which his sins had involved him. "This, thy brother, was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

Such, then, is gospel repentance;—to see yourself away from the Father's service,—to feel your dreadful moral deprivation in the way of error,—to appreciate the excellence of God and your obligations to serve him,—and come home, with a contrite loving heart, to God, to truth and duty. Such a repentant will not draw back unto perdition.

## SECTION III.

### *The New Birth.*

Jesus said unto Nicodemus, who came by night to pay him a respectful compliment, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* The kingdom of God, or of heaven, is usually employed in the Scriptures to denote the spiritual reign of Christ. The prophets had foretold the coming of the Messiah, who should establish a kingdom of righteousness and peace. The Jews generally were expecting that this kingdom would be a temporal one, swayed and supported by physical force. And even the chosen disciples of Jesus, what time he was with them on earth, though they learned much of the nature of his religion, did not understand to apply the term *kingdom* to it,—but for this they were looking for a worldly reign,

* John iii. 3.

which should break the Roman yoke, and restore to Israel their former, and more than their former political freedom and glory. But when they had learned that the kingdom of Jesus is a spiritual kingdom, they doubtless understood in a new and clear light such previous sayings of their Master as these:—"Go, preach the kingdom of God;"[f] "The kingdom of God is come unto you;"[g] "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, lo here! or lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you;"[h] and again, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened."[i] The kingdom of God being a spiritual kingdom, it is, then, in literal terms, the *religion* of Jesus. It is called a kingdom with reference to its government of the hearts and lives of men. That, indeed, is very literally a kingdom, which controls the inner man,—which forms the mind, directs the will, and governs the life. And it is the kingdom of God and of heaven, because it is of God, and in its nature heavenly.

Such being the kingdom of God, the qualifications for an inheritance of it must be spiritual, and not worldly. Accordingly, when Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, in a favorable opinion of him to be sure, but rather with the etiquette of worldly courtiers than with the spirit of the Christian *warfare*, the Master said unto him, "Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Though I take the sentiment expressed by these words, in a general application, yet I will prepare the reader's mind for a better understanding of it, by a few remarks on the use of the particular *language* in the

[f] *Luke* ix. 2. [g] Matt. xii. 28. [h] Luke xvii. 21. [i] Matt. xiii. 24.

case before us. Why did Jesus employ this particular form of expression here, to signify a change which he usually described by other language? I will offer some reasons for believing that he designed this *language* in particular, for application to the *Jews*, a ruler of whom he was addressing.

One circumstance to be noticed is, that the Jews were expecting the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom, on the ground of their natural relation to Abraham. When Jesus, on a certain occasion, informed them by what means they might become free, they said, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, ye shall be made free?" "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin, is the servant (or slave) of sin." They would have it, that, as they were Abraham's seed, that was enough. They were never in bondage, and they needed not to be made free. And so with regard to the kingdom of the promised Messiah,—they supposed that when he should come, they should, of course, as the children of Abraham, enjoy his immediate favor, and inherit the benefits of his kingdom. They supposed that they, as the natural posterity of Abraham, in distinction from other nations, were the legitimate heirs, by natural birth, of this distinguishing favor. But Jesus insisted that they needed a change. They were slaves to error and vice, and needed a liberation from their thraldom. Or, in the words employed in the present case, they *must be born again*. Their natural birth did not entitle them, more than others, to the kingdom of God; they must be born again, *born from above*, as the marginal reading is, by the word of God. This was an appropriate figure of speech to be applied to those who were

erroneously expecting to inherit the kingdom of Christ by virtue of their natural birth as Abraham's progeny, —to tell them they must be *born again*, by the influence of principles from above, in order to enjoy that blessing.

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hopes and expectations, they must have,—they must be born into them, in order to inherit the Messiah's religion, the kingdom of God.

Though the words referred to were spoken by our Lord for a particular application to the Jews of that age, yet a similar change to what was meant by these words, is necessary for all men of all ages, to be experienced in a greater or less degree, according to previous character and circumstances. No one is naturally born in possession of the light of Divine truth, nor does he by his physical growth come into possession of it. Though he may gradually come into the knowledge and enjoyment of it from child hood, being trained up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, yet the same change in substance is experienced, for his enjoying the religion of the gospel. He does not have to be changed *from* so much actual error and moral corruption, as were the Jews who were converted to Christianity in the Saviour's time. But he is and must be changed from ignorance, from a state of destitution with regard to these things, into the knowledge and practice and enjoyment of them. He has been born into the world a living soul; but he must be born again, intellectually and morally. The mind must, by cultivation, be made a fruitful field, or it will be overgrown with thorns, and become a waste wilderness.

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cumbered with weeds of noxious errors. So, for a wise purpose, God has constituted and circumstanced the human mind. It must be changed from ignorance to knowledge,—and from knowledge to knowledge, from glory to glory, by the culture of Christian truth.

A correct view of man in this respect, is of great importance, both with regard to our treatment of ourselves, and of the rising generation. Concerning ourselves, it is not enough that we can boast of our relationship to patriots and freemen. We may boast of our political and religious rights, into the inheritance of which we are born; but we must be born again; the mind must be enlightened with truth and stored with goodness, or we cannot see the kingdom of God, the blessed reign of moral liberty and peace.

And with regard to our treatment of the rising generation,—we are urged by the sentiment before us, to strive for their Christian education. This will lay the foundation of all other good in life. It will reconcile the young aspiring mind to the government of God, and fill the soul with hope in his goodness. It will render the study of his law delightful, and elevate the affections to the pure and the good.

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## CHAPTER XV.

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HAVING now, after exceeding my intended limits, presented the reader with what I regard as a compend of the Christian doctrines, I will close with a brief chapter on the practical influence of these doctrines in forming the life.

1. The system of faith herein comprised, involves the practical exercise of *Supreme Confidence in God.* It evinces, in all its principles and parts, the infinite perfectness of God in all his adorable attributes. By the light of its teachings we see the eternal Father, in the perfectness of his knowledge and wisdom, the infinity of his love, the excellence of his justice, the almightiness of his power, and the indissolubility and glory of his grace. It does not ascribe these perfections to God in *name* merely, and at the same time, in describing the purposes and operations of his creation and government, make him short-sighted, unwise, inconsistent, feeble, and unkind;—but it exhibits these adorable perfections in all the Creator's purposes and doings. In the creation of this beautiful world and its furniture for man; in the constitution of our bodies, and of our minds, and of all the interesting relations in which we are placed; in subjecting us to high duties as his children, by the institution of laws adapted to our being as made in the Divine image; in the annexation of penalties to those laws, and the administration of judgment in their execution; and in

the grand purpose of his grace revealed through Jesus Christ our Saviour,—in all these plans and operations of God, we see the harmonious action of all his perfections. All concur to promote the wise and good design, to rear up, discipline, and qualify, a great family of children, to enjoy with the Father immortal felicity.

The faith of this great and harmonious system of truth, when it has existence in the mind, must produce a most peaceful confidence in God. We cannot fear any ultimate harm from the operations of his government. Even when disappointments and troubles become a portion of our allotment, we rest in hope, seeing that unerring wisdom is overruling present evil for ultimate good.

"This can my fears control,
And bid my sorrows fly;
What real harm can reach my soul,
Beneath my Father's eye?"

In this faith we have also a double enjoyment of the blessings of life. It enables us to receive the daily gifts of his providence, as the kind benefactions of an almighty Father, whose goodness will never leave nor forsake us, but be more and more visibly displayed forever and ever.

"Thus we can with his people taste
The blessings of his love,
While hope attends the sweet repast
Of nobler joys above."

2. The faith of the Christian system, as here exhibited, involves also the exercise of *Supreme Love to God.* This is indeed comprised in the *confidence* just *described.* For where there is confidence there must

be love. You cannot exercise supreme confidence in any being, unless you can view him in a character supremely lovely. Neither can you love a being supremely, unless you can view him in a character perfectly trustworthy. Confidence and love are twin sisters.

Now it is the first great commandment of the moral law, that we love the Lord our God with all our heart. And it is the purpose of the Christian mission to bring the moral creation into the blessed service of this love, in the spirit of reconciliation to God. This can never be done but by the power of reason and love. Men may be taken and thrown by brute force into one or another posture; or they may be driven by slavish fear into proscribed professions, attitudes, and genuflections; but in these operations there is nothing akin to virtue, or related to the service of God. For a dumb and senseless idol, a blind and senseless worship may suffice:—but to the God of supreme intelligence and glory, no worship is acceptable, but that which is rendered in the understanding, and in the spirit of sentimental gratitude and love. But no man can love God until he has so learned the truth as to see him in his loveliness. It is not an affection into which the mind can force itself without a reason. But in the light of truth, and the communion of love Divine, the soul can respond to the beloved disciple, "We love him because he first loved us." So certainly did the apostle view it a settled principle, that when a man has a true and effective knowledge of the character of God, he will love him, that he boldly affirms, "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love." He who knows God, therefore, will love him. Hence, it is the econ-

omy of God's wisdom, for the reconciliation of man to himself, to make known his everlasting love, and his effective grace.

It is on this point especially, that the wisdom of the world is foolishness with God. Human policy has suggested, that even if God's great purpose of unfailing grace for mankind is true, it is not *wise* and *prudent* to promulgate such truth. But the inspired apostle assures us, that in "making known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself, that he might gather together in one, all things in Christ,"—"*God hath abounded toward us in* ALL WISDOM AND PRUDENCE."[a] He knows what is in the moral nature of man; he knows by what influences his heart is to be won to the Source of all good; and accordingly, the very first aim of the gospel mission is, to assure his children, even his lost and sinful children, that he loves them. "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." Go, then, ye servants of Jesus, and fear not that it shall harm the children to let them know that the Father loves them.

3. Christianity, which it has been the labor of this volume to condense from the Scriptures, produces a *filial respect for the Law of God*, and *obedience to its Precepts*. The confidence in God, before described, will naturally beget the assurance that his laws are the laws of a friend, wisely framed, and adapted to our welfare. It is not from a peaceful confidence in God that men are led into sin. It is from a distrust

[a] Eph. i. 8—10.

of God's wisdom and goodness, a dissatisfaction with his government and laws, and a hope to do better for themselves by pursuing their own ways. The human doctrines of revenge, ascribed to the government of God, will not effect the needed reform. Look upon the more hardened sinners, and you will see that these are the principles which have formed their hearts, the moral atmosphere which they inhale. Their very throat is an open sepulchre, from which issue perpetual streams of "hell and damnation." The same streams issuing from the pulpit will not refine them. They need the contact of a different moral element, that of love Divine. They need light, the light of truth, to see that God's love is not interposed between them and their best good in life, but leads them in the way of peace. Let them have the clear light of the Father's law, as presented in the fourth chapter of this work, and then the same motive, the love of life and good days, which prompts mankind to all their ordinary labors, will return them to obedience and duty. And if, in an evil hour, one is tempted by the thoughts of greater good in sin, the truth we have exhibited on the *penalties of the law*, will counteract the evil. It will sound the caution in his ear, "Do thyself no harm;" "There is no peace to the wicked;" "Destruction and misery are in their ways;" "Though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished."

Here, then, is a perfect system of faith and practice. It secures the highest principle of virtue, confidence in God, and at the same time preserves the assurance of punishment in case of wrong. And one of these principles of action is not countervailed by the other. Our confidence in God does not free us from the assurance

of punishment in case we transgress,—nor does our fear of punishment interfere with, or weaken our confidence in God. This is the beautiful and practical harmony of *Christian Divinity*, peculiar to itself, unknown in the religions of human schools.

But, above all, as we have remarked before, the supreme principle of virtue is love. We have attended to the first commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." The second is like unto it, or rather is involved in it, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Like begetteth like; love begetteth love. The manifestation of God's love to us brings us into the reciprocity of this love Divine;—and then it fills the soul with the spirit of communicative goodness. And this spirit of communicative goodness, the principle of pure philanthropy, of universal kindness, is the moral power by which man can reach, win, and save his brother man.

We thank God that this supremely important principle is becoming better understood. It seems, in truth, to be getting enthroned as the ruling genius of the age. What a change the power of kindness is working in civilized society! The rulers of the world have been mainly depending, for the orderly government of mankind, on tyrannic severity and brute violence. They have deemed knowledge and freedom among the people to be unsafe, and their government has been based upon perpetual warfare against the dearest rights and purest aspirations of the human soul. Hence, their thrones have been erected in seas of blood, the waves of which, rebounding, have again dashed them to ruin. Go with the philanthropist Howard, by the perusal of his *memoirs,* into the prisons of Europe as they were.

case before us. Why did Jesus employ this particular form of expression here, to signify a change which he usually described by other language? I will offer some reasons for believing that he designed this *language* in particular, for application to the *Jews*, a ruler of whom he was addressing.

One circumstance to be noticed is, that the Jews were expecting the benefits of the Messiah's kingdom, on the ground of their natural relation to Abraham. When Jesus, on a certain occasion, informed them by what means they might become free, they said, "We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, ye shall be made free?" "Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth sin, is the servant (or slave) of sin." They would have it, that, as they were Abraham's seed, that was enough. They were never in bondage, and they needed not to be made free. And so with regard to the kingdom of the promised Messiah,—they supposed that when he should come, they should, of course, as the children of Abraham, enjoy his immediate favor, and inherit the benefits of his kingdom. They supposed that they, as the natural posterity of Abraham, in distinction from other nations, were the legitimate heirs, by natural birth, of this distinguishing favor. But Jesus insisted that they needed a change. They were slaves to error and vice, and needed a liberation from their thraldom. Or, in the words employed in the present case, they *must be born again*. Their natural birth did not entitle them, more than others, to the kingdom of God; they must be born again, *born from above*, as the marginal reading is, by the word of God. This was an appropriate figure of speech to be applied to those who were

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*worketh* repentance to salvation not to be repented of."[d] That is, godly sorrow for sin worketh a change, a reformation of mind and conduct.

It is hence perceived that gospel repentance includes a change of mind and affections with regard to sin itself. Consequently, when we hear professing Christians remark, that if they could throw off certain foreign and extraneous fear, such, for instance, as the fear of the fabled Tartarus of Pluto, they would care not for the service of God, but would take their fill of sin, we know they have not passed through the work of Christian repentance. Their hearts are in love with sin; they are "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Their professed repentance is a mere piece of wary policy. It is like the case of the supposed dying man, who ordered his son to convey back to his neighbor's barn an item of stolen property, but on finding himself convalescent countermanded the order, and had the property retaken to his own use. There was the passion of fear, but no inward hatred of sin.

There is a good illustration of the subject of repentance in the parable of the prodigal son. It is true the sufferings of the poor wanderer were a means of bringing him to himself, to his sober reflections. And this is a fac-simile of all punishment in the government of God, as to its purposed use. It is to check, restrain, and bring the transgressor to himself. But the prodigal was not governed by the consideration of any extraneous harm, any future revenge, from an enraged father. He was *in* a lost condition; sin itself was his most dreadful enemy; and he had no prospect, in transgression's path, but darkness and woe. He

[d] 2 Cor. vii. 10.

turned his back upon his sins, and returned to his father's house. And the congratulation which he met upon his return was, not that he had thus averted the father's wrath, which would have inflicted a dreadful death upon him, but that he had escaped from the death in which his sins had involved him. "This, thy brother, was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

Such, then, is gospel repentance;—to see yourself away from the Father's service,—to feel your dreadful moral deprivation in the way of error,—to appreciate the excellence of God and your obligations to serve him,—and come home, with a contrite loving heart, to God, to truth and duty. Such a repentant will not draw back unto perdition.

## SECTION III.

### *The New Birth.*

Jesus said unto Nicodemus, who came by night to pay him a respectful compliment, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."* The kingdom of God, or of heaven, is usually employed in the Scriptures to denote the spiritual reign of Christ. The prophets had foretold the coming of the Messiah, who should establish a kingdom of righteousness and peace. The Jews generally were expecting that this kingdom would be a temporal one, swayed and supported by physical force. And even the chosen disciples of Jesus, what time he was with them on earth, though they learned much of the nature of his religion, did not understand to apply the term *kingdom* to it,—but for this they were looking for a worldly reign,

* John iii. 3.

which should break the Roman yoke, and restore to Israel their former, and more than their former political freedom and glory. But when they had learned that the kingdom of Jesus is a spiritual kingdom, they doubtless understood in a new and clear light such previous sayings of their Master as these:—"Go, preach the kingdom of God;"[f] "The kingdom of God is come unto you;"[g] "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation; neither shall they say, lo here! or lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you;"[h] and again, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened."[i] The kingdom of God being a spiritual kingdom, it is, then, in literal terms, the *religion* of Jesus. It is called a kingdom with reference to its government of the hearts and lives of men. That, indeed, is very literally a kingdom, which controls the inner man,—which forms the mind, directs the will, and governs the life. And it is the kingdom of God and of heaven, because it is of God, and in its nature heavenly.

Such being the kingdom of God, the qualifications for an inheritance of it must be spiritual, and not worldly. Accordingly, when Nicodemus came to Jesus by night, in a favorable opinion of him to be sure, but rather with the etiquette of worldly courtiers than with the spirit of the Christian *warfare*, the Master said unto him, "Except a man be *born again*, he cannot see the kingdom of God.

Though I take the sentiment expressed by these words, in a general application, yet I will prepare the reader's mind for a better understanding of it, by a few remarks on the use of the particular *language* in the

[f] Luke ix. 2. [g] Matt. xii. 28. [h] Luke xvii. 21. [i] Matt. xiii. 24.

There the offenders against the laws, if that offence were only the inability to pay a debt, were cast out from the kind sympathies of the community. They were left abandoned there, generally in under-ground cells, to dampness, cold, hunger, filth, sickness, and chains. Their treatment was calculated to promote hostility in them and their friends, against the community. These real hells were fashioned after the model of the fabulous hell of the people's creed, where punishment is revenge and not chastisement.

But a blessed change is in progress. As we have said, the principle of heavenly wisdom, the spirit of universal philanthropy, is becoming the ruling genius of the age. It is reforming creeds, leavening the hearts of all sects, and modifying governments and laws. We see it in the prison discipline movement, which, enlisting the co-operation of different sects, is laboring to make our prisons schools of moral discipline, rather than engines of torture. We see it in the anti-slavery enterprise, which, bating all the indiscretions of men in the use of means, is founded upon the broad principles of the universal paternity of God, and the universal brotherhood of men, who are all bound to labor for each other's instruction, elevation, prosperity and happiness. We see it in the temperance reform, the spirit of which discerns a brother in the low and degraded, breathes upon them a brother's love, and warms them into life,—reaches forth a brother's arm, raises them up, and leads them home to virtue and peace.

This is the working of Christian truth, in forming the life. Its messengers may be despised for their humbleness, or forgotten in the bustle of the world;

but their principles will live on,—truth shall survive, and work its work, "and none shall hinder it."

And now, beloved brethren, be it our chief ambition, so to live as co-workers with the spirit of Christian truth, that he who examines our faith, and witnesses our life, shall be constrained to say of us as it was said of father Abraham, "So, then, faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect."

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